

wanting to him. Everyone knows that, without the Jews, Rome would have refused it to Christ. And the British Empire is like the Roman Empire. The elan has been created. The soul of the Eastern peoples has been stirred to its very depths and vibrations are heard all over the earth.

Great religious appearances in the East have always a rhythm. One of two things will surely happen : either the faith of Gandhi will be crowned with success, or it will repeat itself, just as centuries ago Christ and Buddha were born, in the complete incarnation of a mortal demi-God of a principle of life that will lead future humanity to a safer and more peaceful resting-place !

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It is useful to consult the two following sets of book-
(1) "*Young India*", Gandhi's Journal which continues to appear at Ahmedabad (his son is now the printer and publisher);

(2) "The Modern Review", edited at Calcutta by Ramananda Chatterji, which is the medium of expression for Rabindranath Tagore's thoughts.

The Review "Unity" of Chicago follows the Gandhian movement closely and with intense sympathy.

Hindu Culture

BY K. S. RAMASWAMY SASTRY, B.A., B.L.,

WITH FOREWORD BY SIR JOHN WOODROFFE **Rs. 3**

If it be a sin to worship one's motherland, to see nothing but perfection in her system of life, and to look upon her culture as the highest expression of the supreme ideal, Mr. Ramaswami Sastri must be the most offending soul alive. Nevertheless it remains true that much of the inner meaning of Hindu culture is still lost upon the average Englishman. It is perfectly true that, though there are signs of awakening, Hindu art and letters have been neglected in the West. Those who have eyes to see can find much that is of the very highest calibre in Hindu music, art and literature, and it has long been acknowledged that its ancient civilisation was for a life time in advance of the world. Mr. Ramaswami Sastri rightly insists that if India is to recover her position in the spiritual world, if she is to proclaim her true message, she must cease to imitate the West and follow the lines of her self-realisation along the path of her own peculiar ideals. It is in this direction and in its insistence on the inherent nobility of Hindu culture that this book has its main value.—

The Times Literary Supplement

Rabindranath Tagore

A STUDY OF HIS LATER WORKS.

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B.A., B.L.,

Rs. 2

This book is a succinct and harmonious review of the later works of Tagore and going through it the reader will have an idea of the writings studied as a harmonious whole.—*Prabhuddha Bharata*.

This book holds up the mirror to Tagore's poetry, religion and educational ideals.—*Justice*, London.

S. GANESAN : PUBLISHER : TRIPLICANE, MADRAS

The Making of a Republic

BY KEVIN R. O'SHIEL

Re. 1-8-0

Mr. O'Shiel, a gifted Irish writer, narrates in the following pages the thrilling story of how America wrought her freedom. The United States did not challenge Imperial supremacy without courting an extremely intensive repression campaign. Her meetings and organisations were suppressed as "illegal," "disaffected" persons were deported, and martial law proclaimed. America, as Ireland, had her "loyalists" too, who ranged themselves against the patriots, urged thereto either by fear or by self-interest and were guilty of traitorous deeds. The defection of the Tories forms one of the most thrilling episodes in the struggle for American Independence. But America flinched not. She answered their onslaughts on her freedom with an intensive and vigorous boycott resulting in a loss of £3,000,000 to England and the ruin of many London Merchants. Her women, organised as "Daughters of freedom," sat at the spinning wheel to clothe the country, while all, excluding faint hearts, worked for economic freedom. But her ordeal was extremely trying. "Freedom's high way is a narrow and a thorny road bestrewn with many obstacles, and those who would walk there must have perseverance, earnestness, self-restraint, and above all, courage, moral as well as physical. What is wanted is that deep-rooted conviction which guides the energy of the oppressed towards the performing of great deeds. The palm of freedom is for the brave, the patient, the serious, and the industrious." The book contains many striking episodes and reads really more like a romance than as a dry historical composition.

S. GANESAN : PUBLISHER : TRIPLICANE, MADRAS

O Tagore! O Gandhi! rivers of India, who, like
Indus and the Ganges, encircle in your double embrace
the East and the West—the latter, Mahatma, master
of self-sacrifice and of heroic action—the former
vast dream of light—both issuing from God Himself
on this world tilled by the ploughshare of His
Scatter, Scatter His seeds!

March, 1923

MAHATMA* GANDHI

I

THE EARLY CAREER OF MAHATMA GANDHI

A SMALL weak man, with a lean face and tranquil brown eyes, and with spread-out big ears. He wears a white head-dress, a coarse white cloth covers his body, and his feet are bare. His food consists of rice, fruits and water; he sleeps on the floor; he sleeps but for a short while; and he works untiringly. His bodily appearance does not count at all—"An

* This is the literal meaning of the word which was bestowed on Gandhi. Maha=Grand, Athma=Soui. The name can be traced back to the Upanishads, where it denotes the Supreme Being and, through communion of knowledge and of love, those who unite themselves with him.

He is the luminous one, the creator of all, the Mahatma,
Always enthroned in the heart of the peoples,
Revealed by heart, by intuition and by intelligence,
He who knows him, becomes immortal.

When in December last Tagore visited Gandhi's Ashram he cited this beautiful verse from a well-known Upanishad and applied it to the hostle.

expression of great patience and great love" is what strikes us at first when we see him. Pearson, seeing him in 1913 in South Africa, is reminded of Francis of Assisi. He is kind and courteous towards his adversaries; his modesty knows no bounds; he is scrupulous to the point of appearing ever to hesitate and say, "I am mistaken": he never conceals his errors, never enters into compromises, resorts to no diplomacy, shuns oratorical effect, or rather never thinks of it: he hates popular demonstrations which his personality inspires—occasions when sometimes his lean body runs the risk of being trampled on but for the help of his friend Maulana Shaukat Ali who wards off all danger with his big athletic body. This great man, the Mahatma, is "literally sick of the multitude that adores him": he, at heart, distrusts numbers and he has a great aversion to "Mobocracy" or the rabble let loose. He feels easy and comfortable only when he is amidst a few; he is happy only in solitude, hearing the "Still Small Voice" that commands . . .

This is the man who has stirred to action three hundred millions of men, shaken the British Empire, and inaugurated, in human politics, the most powerful moral movement since nearly two thousand years.

I

His full name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was born in a small semi-independent State

HIS EARLY CAREER

in the North-West of India, at Porbandar on the ocean of Oman, on the 2nd October 1869. His father, Karamchand Gandhi, was first minister of this State. He hailed from a rich, intelligent and cultivated family, but did not belong to the superior Brahmin Caste. His parents belonged to the Jain sect of Hinduism, one of whose doctrines is that of Ahimsa * which he later on victoriously proclaimed to the world. For the Jains, love more than intellectual strength is the path that leads one to the Supreme Being. The "Ramayana" was regularly read in the family of Gandhi. His early education was entrusted to a Brahmin who made him repeat the texts of Vishnu. But later he complained that he had not become a scholar in Sanskrit: this fact furnished one of the grounds of his opposition to English education which deprived him of the treasures of his mother-tongue. He is, nevertheless, well-read in the Hindu scriptures, but he reads the Vedas and the Upanishads only in translations.

Married even when he was a boy, † he went to England in his twentieth year to complete his studies in the University of London and in the Inns of Court. His mother, a very pious woman, had

* A=privative prefix, himsa=the doing of evil; the word means non-violence: one of the most ancient principles of Hindu religion, particularly stressed by Buddha, and by the champions of the Vishnu Cult who had great influence over Gandhi.

† He has recounted the story of his infancy in a familiar discourse at a conference of the untouchables (Parayas) on the 13th April 1921.

‡ Later he condemned infant marriages which form a cause of racial ruin.

made him take, before his departure, the three Jain Vows which enjoined on him abstention from wine, abstention from meat and from sexual relations. We note from one of his discourses (13th April 1921) that he, while in Europe, studied the other religions and that he was at one time so much moved by his studies that he wavered between Hinduism and Christianity. He recognised, however, that for him "happiness was possible only through the Hindu Religion". He returned to India in 1891 and became an advocate of the High Court of Bombay. A few years later he gave up his profession which he regarded as an immoral one. Even during the period when he discharged the duties of an advocate, he always reserved to himself the right of renouncing a brief, if the injustice of the cause became clear to him.

Already at this time, the activities of great political leaders had evoked in his mind presentiments of his future mission. These leaders* who thus exerted an influence over his life were the Parsi, Dadabhai, the uncrowned King of Bombay and the professor Gokhale, both of them burning with a religious love for their land: Gokhale, one of the best statesmen of his land and one of the first to revive the question of Indian education; Dadabhai, founder of the

* These forerunners, whose political hardihood has been subsequently surpassed, have been the victims of ingratitude and forgetfulness, in the hands of new generations. But Gandhi has continued faithful to them, and has on several occasions held up their names to the veneration of Young India (see *Hind Swaraj*, letter to the Parayas 23rd March 1921, and the "Confession of Faith" 13th July 1921).

Indian national movement (on Gandhi's own showing), who, bridling the youthful ardour of Gandhi gave him in 1892 his first practical lesson on Ahimsa in public life, the passive heroism, the passionate elan of the soul which resists evil, not with evil, but with love. We shall come back later on in the course of this essay to this magic word which forms the sublime message of India to the world.

II

It was in 1893 that the political activities of Gandhi commenced. From 1893 to 1914 South Africa was his sphere of labour and after 1914 the scene of his labour changed to India itself.

The fact that Gandhi's activity in South Africa for a period of twenty years had not produced any echoes or impression in Europe only evidences the incredible narrowness of view of our political men, of our historians, our thinkers and even of our religious men; for, this period was an epoch of the soul, unparalleled in our time, not only in respect of the power and constancy of the self-sacrifice involved, but also in respect of the final triumph which it gained.

In 1890-91, 1,50,000 Indians had settled down in South Africa, particularly in Natal. The influx of this foreign people gave rise, amongst the whites, to a feeling of hatred towards coloured races, which hatred the Government translated into measures of ostracism. The Government prohibited Indian immigration and wished to expel those who had

already settled down in the land. Systematic persecutions rendered their life intolerable: harassing taxes, humiliating police regulations, public outrages, lynchings, pillages and ravages under the shield of white civilisation. In 1893, the South African Indians appealed to Gandhi for help. He hastened thither.

Then begins the epic fight of a conscience against the force of the State and of the brutal masses. A lawyer still at this time, he began demonstrating, in a juridical way, the illegality of the Bill of Asiatic exclusion, and he triumphed in spite of the most virulent kind of opposition. Then, desiring to ensure for his compatriots in South Africa the honourable privileges of citizens and to see such rights upheld, he decided to accept the life of an ordinary South African Indian. He abandoned his lucrative practice at Johannesburg for embracing, like Francis of Assisi, Poverty itself. He shared all the hardships and trials of the miserable and persecuted Indians and he hallowed them by teaching them the law of Non-Resistance. He founded an agricultural colony near Durban after the model of Tolstoy whom he greatly admired.

* My friend, Paul Birukoff, has sent me a long unpublished letter of Tolstoy to Gandhi, written in September 1918, a little before his death. Tolstoy had read Gandhi's South African Journal, "Indian Opinion" and rejoiced over what he had learnt about the non-resisting Indians. He gave his best wishes to this movement and said that "non-resistance is the law of love, that is to say, the aspiration to the communion of human soul". This is the law promulgated by Christ and all the great sages.

He assembled all the Indians in this place, set apart lands for each, and made them take the vow of Poverty. He himself did the most menial tasks. There, for years, the silent people resisted the Government. As they had come away from towns, the industrial life in towns was paralysed. This was indeed a kind of religious strike, against which violence was powerless, like that of Imperial Rome against the first Christians. But few amongst these Christians would have carried the doctrine of love and pardon to the point of going, like Gandhi, to the help of their persecutors when they themselves were menaced with danger. Every time that the South African State found itself confronted by grave dangers, Gandhi suspended the non-co-operation campaign and volunteered his help. In 1899, during the Boer War, he formed an Indian Red Cross which was twice honourably mentioned, with encomiums for its bravery under fire. In 1904 when the great plague ravaged Johannesburg, Gandhi organised a hospital. In 1906, when the indigenous natives of Natal rose up in rebellion he took part in the war at the head of a body of ambulance men, and the Governor of Natal thanked him publicly for it.

III

These chivalrous services did not disarm the

Birukoff has recently written to me that he has found in the "Archive Tolstoy" at Moscow other letters of Tolstoy to Gandhi. He will publish these afterwards along with other documents under the title of "Tolstoy and the Orient".

hatred towards the coloured races. Thrown into the prison several times,—(and this, soon after the thanks were expressed to him by the Natal Governor)—condemned to rigorous imprisonment, put into the cage and bound hand and foot to its bars, insulted and assaulted by the mob, once left for dead, Gandhi experienced all the sufferings and humiliations of a martyr. Nothing, however, altered his faith which grew only stronger after the sufferings and trials. In 1908, he wrote, in reply to the school of violence in South Africa, his famous small book, “Hind Swaraj,” the gospel of heroic love*.

The severity of the struggle continued till the twentieth year. In the autumn of 1913, Gandhi again organised Non-Resistance, from Natal to Transvaal. He was again imprisoned along with thousands of Indians who, for want of prisons big enough to accommodate them, were shut up in mines. But this time, the whole of India was stirred to the core, and the Viceroy himself, yielding to public opinion, protested against the action of the Government of South Africa.

The indomitable tenacity and the magic of the “great soul” operated: force bended its knee before heroic gentleness. The most inveterate enemy of the Indian cause, General Smuts, who in 1900 declared that he would never erase from the book of Statutes an anti-Indian law, felt happy, five years later, in seeing this law off the statute book. Lord Hardinge supported the Indian cause and

* I shall speak of it later on.

n Imperial Commission decided in favour of Gandhi on almost all the points.* In 1914 a bill accorded liberty of residence to all Indians who wished to remain in South Africa as free labourers. After twenty years of sacrifices, Non-Resistance had won.

II

GANDHI AND TILAK

GANDHI returned to India with the prestige of a leader. The movement of national independence had been organised in India as early as the beginning of the century. Thirty years before, the Indian National Congress had been founded by a few intelligent Englishmen like A. O. Hume, Sir W. Wedderburn, liberal-minded Victorians who for a long time had by their efforts kept alive a feeling of loyalty within the National Congress by vigorously endeavouring to reconcile the interests of India with the English suzerainty. The victory of Japan over Russia awakened Asiatic pride and the provocations offered by Lord Curzon injured the feelings of patriotic Indians. In the midst of the Congress itself, there was formed an extremist party whose aggressive nationalism found echoes in the land. Nevertheless, the old constitutional party continued to remain, down till the world war under the influence of G. K. Gokhale, a sincere patriot, but faithful to the English connection; but the national sentiment, which pervaded this assembly of national representatives, led it to claim Swara

about the meaning of which the leaders themselves were not unanimous—one body of opinion distinctly favouring the continuance of co-operation with England, the other wishing to see India free from the British connection; the former adopting the model of Canada and South Africa, the latter holding up the example of Japan as the type. Gandhi at this stage brought in his solution, which was more of a religious nature than political, but more radical than all the others, Hind Swaraj. He really lacked, at that time, an exact knowledge of the *milieu* which would enable him to apply and adapt his views to the practical conditions; for we cannot forget that though his long sojourn in South Africa had furnished him with a close and profound knowledge of the Hindu Soul and of the irresistible power of “Ahimsa”, he had remained away from his land for twenty-three years. He therefore simply observed things and gathered up his thoughts and views.

I

When the great War burst upon Europe in 1914, Gandhi was so far from thinking of revolt against the Empire that he proceeded to England to raise a corps of ambulance men. “He believed honestly,” he wrote in 1921, “that he was a citizen of the Empire”. He recalled this fact, many times, in his letters of 1922, “To all the Englishmen in India”: “Dear friends! No Englishman has co-operated more closely with the British Empire than myself

during the twenty-nine years of my public activity. I have endangered my life four times for the sake of England. . . . Down till 1919, I had spoken only for co-operation, with a sincere and honest conviction. . . .”

He did not stand alone in this respect. The whole of India had in 1914 allowed itself to be taken in by the hypocritical idealism of the War of the Right. When England requested for India's help in the War, she had held out great hopes and promises before India's eyes. The people greatly longed for Home Rule was represented to India as the reward for her faithfulness and assistance. In August 1917 the intelligent Secretary of State for India, E. Montagu, promised a responsible government for India. There was an official exchange of views and in July 1918, the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, signed with Montagu, an official report on Constitutional Reform. The danger for the allied armies was very great, in these first months of 1918. Lloyd George had, on the second of April, addressed an appeal to the people of India, and the War Conference then assembled at Delhi at the end of the same month encouraged the hope that the independence of India was near at hand. The whole of India responded in a body to the call and offered to England the proof of her loyalty. India furnished 9,85,000 men to England and she made other immense sacrifices. And she expected, with complete confidence, a reward for her fidelity.

The awakening from this dream was terrible.

towards the end of the year, the danger for the allies in the Western front of the War had passed : passed also had the recollection of the services rendered by India. When the armistice was concluded the Government threw off its mask. Far from giving any measures of liberty to India, the Government only cut down the existing liberty of citizens. The Rowlatt Bills, presented to the Imperial Legislative Council of Delhi in February 1919, displayed an outrageous distrust towards the land which had given such solid proofs of her loyalty to England. These bills continued the Defence of India Act that existed during the War and perpetuated the system of the Secret Police, censorship and all the tyrannical annoyances of a real "state of siege."

In India, thus undeceived, there was a sudden revulsion of feeling. The revolt now began and Gandhi organised it.

II

During the previous years he had confined his attention to social reforms like the amelioration of the condition of agricultural classes. Quite unobtrusively he had made a victorious trial, at Kaira in Guzerat and at Champaran, of the formidable weapon of Ahimsa which he subsequently employed in the great National fight—the weapon of passionate Non-Resistance which is so peculiarly his own and which we shall study later on under the name of "Satyagraha" given to it by him.

But till 1919 he had remained somewhat aloof

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from the activity of Indian political life where the more advanced section of people, having been re-united in 1916 by Mrs. Annie Besant (soon superseded however), recognised Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak as their chief. This was a man of extraordinary energy and strength of mind, uniting in an iron bundle the triple greatness of intelligence, will-power and character, possessing greater intellectual power than Gandhi, also more substantially nourished on the ancient Asiatic culture, a *savant* and erudite scholar who had sacrificed all the demands of his genius at the altar of national service and, devoid, like Gandhi, of all personal ambition, expected to retire into private life and resume his scientific labours the moment the cause of his land was crowned with victory. So long as he lived, Tilak was the undisputed leader of his land. Who could say what would have happened, if a premature death had not taken him off in August 1920? Gandhi who bowed in reverence before the greatness of his genius differed essentially from Tilak in his opinion regarding the political methods of the national movement. If Tilak had continued to live, it is certain that Gandhi would have carefully confined his activities to the religious side of the national movement. What would have been the elan of the peoples of India under this double leadership? Nothing would then have been able to resist or repress them, for Tilak possessed mastery over action just as Gandhi was the master of soul-force. Fate however decided other-

wise ; Tilak's death is to be deplored, not only as a blow to India, but as affecting Gandhi himself. The position of the Chief of the minority in the land of the moral elite, would have been much more consonance with his temperament and his secret desires. He would voluntarily have resigned Tilak the direction of the majority. Gandhi himself never had faith in the majority, but Tilak, the mathematician of action, believed in the power of numbers. Tilak was a child of democracy. He was also resolutely politic and he never troubled himself about the requirements of religion. He used to say that "politics was not for Sadhus". This great scholar would have sacrificed even truth for the sake of national liberty. This truthful man, whose private life was one of stainless purity, never hesitated to say that all was fair in politics. It can be said that between such a man and the dictators of Moscow there might exist some affinity of thought. Gandhi's thoughts can, on the contrary, never be related to the Bolshevist philosophy.* All the mutual discussions between Gandhi and Tilak have only brought into prominence the contradistinction of their methods in spite of their profound mutual admiration. Unlike Tilak, Gandhi proclaimed that he would certainly sacrifice liberty for the sake of truth, if this ever became necessary and whatever religious love he may have for his land; he esteems his religion much higher than his land.

* He has distinctly given out his opinion against Bolshevism.

“I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. If she accepts the doctrine of the sword it will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself.”*

III

Great words are these, which explain the full character of the fight which we shall soon be describing here; for these words make of the apostle of India an apostle of the world, our common citizen.† And it is on behalf of us all that the combat has been raging in India for the last four years.

* 11th August 1920. *Young India*, Page 259.

† “The whole of humanity is one. There may be differences of races, but the higher a race, the greater its duties.” *Ethical Religion*

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

It is noteworthy that even at the time when he assumed the leadership of the movement of revolt against the Rowlatt Act, he did so only "for diverting the movement from violence." * He knew that the revolt had come and had to be guided.

For understanding clearly the later development of Indian politics, it is necessary to remember that Gandhi's philosophy is composed of two distinct elements: the religious substratum which is vast and firm, and "the social action" which he constructs on these universal bases, by adapting them to the actual circumstances and to the opinions of the country. He is intensely religious by nature, and politician only by necessity.

When the turn of events and the disappearance of the other leaders of the land compelled him to take upon himself the duty of steering the ship in the tempest, the political and practical character of his activities became confirmed and prominent. But the essential portion of the edifice has always been

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the temple crypt which, vast and profound, was intended to bear some other cathedral on itself than that which had to be hurriedly built on it. This essential portion is durable, all else is temporary and only intended for use during years of transition. It is important clearly to comprehend the nature of this subterranean church where the philosophy of Gandhi receives its solid inspiration. It is here that Gandhi every day retires for replenishing fresh energy and force for the action outside.

I

Gandhi believes with great fervour in Hinduism, the religion of his people; but he does it neither like a *savant* studying the texts out of literary curiosity nor like a devotee who blindly accepts all tradition. His religious beliefs are controlled by his conscience as well as by his reason.

“I shall not make a fetish of religion and I cannot justify any evil in its sacred name.* I have no desire to carry one single soul with me, if I cannot convince him by an appeal to his reason. I shall even go to the length of rejecting the divinity of the most ancient Shastras, if they do not appeal to my reason.” †

On the other hand—and this is natural—he does not recognise and cannot allow, for Hinduism, any exclusiveness.

“I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the

* 27th October 1920.

† July 1920 *Young India*. Also October 6 1921.

Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Zend Avesta, to be as much divinely inspired as Vedas. Hinduism is not a missionary religion. There is a place in it for the worship of all the prophets of the world. It tells everyone to adore God according to his proper faith or Dharma, and thus he lives in peace with all religions.” *

He has not failed to note the errors and vices which have crept into Hinduism in the course of centuries, and he condemns them :

“ I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults ; I dare say she has many more than I can see myself, but the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing elates me so much as the music of the Gita or Ramayana by Tulasidas, the only two books in Hinduism which I may be said to know. I know the vice that is going on to-day in all the great Hindu shrines, but I love them nevertheless. I am a reformer through and through, but my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things of Hinduism ”. †

II

What then are these essential truths to which he expresses his adherence? He enumerates them expressly in an article of the 6th October 1921, which may be styled his Public Credo :

* “ All religions are various paths which converge towards the same object.” *Hind Swaraj*. See also *Ethical Religion*.

† 6th October 1921, *Young India*, Page 801.

(1) I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures, and therefore in avataras and re-birth.

(2) I believe in the Varnasrama Dharma, in sense, in my opinion, strictly Vedic, but not in the present popular and crude sense.

(3) I believe in the protection of the cow, in a much larger sense than the popular.

(4) I do not disbelieve in idol worship.

Every European who scans these lines will probably feel that the mentality which finds its expression here is so different from ours and so rigorously embodied in a set of religious and social doctrines so distant in time and in space that it is vain to follow this line of thinking. Let him, however, only read on and, a few lines lower down, he will find the following with which he will be more familiar :

“ I believe implicitly in the Hindu aphorism, that no one truly knows the Sastras who has not attained perfection in innocence (Ahimsa), in truth (Satya) and self-control (Brahmacharya) and who has renounced all acquisition, or possession of wealth.”

Here the thought of the Hindu meets that of the Gospel. Gandhi was fully aware of this relationship. When an English missionary questioned him about the books which had influenced him most, he responded at first, “The New Testament.” * His “Ethical Religion” ends with a quotation from Christ

* Gandhi adds Ruskin and Tolstoy, as next in importance.

† Seek the Kingdom of God, and justice, and the rest will be given unto you.

We should also remember that this Asiatic belief was nourished on the teachings of Tolstoy,* that he had translated Ruskin and Plato,† that he relies on Thoreau, admires Mazzini, reads Edward Carpenter and that his thoughts are impregnated with the best of those of America and Europe. There is no reason at all why a European should feel himself a stranger to the thoughts of this great man, if only he takes the trouble of approaching him in the proper spirit. He will then recognise the profound meaning of the articles of Gandhi's Credo, which at first seem to astonish the European. Two of the articles in particular appear to open up an impassable gulf between the religious spirit of India and that of Europe: the cult of the cow and the system of caste.‡ But let us see how Gandhi himself understands these two articles of the Credo.

III

Indeed these articles are not, for Gandhi, subsidiary or unimportant in the body of his doctrine.

* The brochure, *Hind Swaraj*, contains, at the end, a list prepared by Gandhi of six works of Tolstoy which he counsels all to read, especially "The Kingdom of God is within you" and "What art." To a question which is put to him, "In what relations do you stand with Count Tolstoy," Gandhi answers in *Young India*, "My relation to Tolstoy, is that of a devout admirer who owes him much in life." See also Tolstoy's "Letter to the Liberals"; *Young India* Page 25.

† *The trial and death of Socrates*, translated by Gandhi, amongst the books proscribed by the Government of India in 1919.

‡ Gandhi is not opposed to idol worship. "An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. . . . Idol worship is part of human nature," etc. *Young India* October 6, 1921.

The protection of the cow is the characteristic of Hinduism. Gandhi sees therein one of the highest manifestations of human evolution. Why? Because "the cow is a symbol of the whole of the sub-human world with which man makes a treaty of alliance. The symbol represents the fraternity between man and beast." In Gandhi's own words "This principle carries the human being above the limitations of his own race. It brings about the identity of man with every living being." If the cow has been chosen in preference to other animals, it is because the cow is in India the best companion, the source of plenty, and Gandhi sees in this soft animal "a vast poem of pity". But the cult has nothing of the idolatrous in it and nobody condemns more strongly than Gandhi the cruel fetish of the people of India who follow only the letter of their scripture without practising the spirit of compassion for the mute creatures of God. Once this principle is understood, (and who would have understood it better than the poor man of Assisi?) one cannot at all be astonished at the importance which Gandhi attaches to this article of his Credo. He is not at all wrong when he says that the protection of the cow, in the sense which he gives to it, is the greatest gift of Hinduism to the world. To the Biblical precept, "Love thy neighbour as thyself", he adds "Every living thing is thy neighbour."*

* On the cult of the cow, see *Young India* March 16, June 8 and August 4, 1920, May 18, October 6, 1921. On castes, 8th December 1920 and 9th October 1921.

The caste system is perhaps still more difficult for the European to understand and accept. I do not boast that I shall succeed in making the European accept it by explaining here Gandhi's point of view. But Gandhi's exposition of this problem will clearly establish that no thought of pride or social superiority underlies this system which actually only ascribes duties to members of each rank or status.

“Varnasrama Dharma is, in my opinion, inherent in human nature and Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science”.

But he restricts the number of the castes to four only : *Brahmins* (the intellectual and spiritual class), *Kshatriyas* (the military and ruling class), *Vaisyas* (the Commercial Class), and the *Sudras*. He does not recognise any relation of superiority or inferiority as amongst these castes. These are only different vocations and nothing more. There are duties to be performed but no privileges to be enjoyed*.

“It is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to one self a higher status or assign to another, a lower one. All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahmin with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaisya with his commercial ability and a Sudra with his bodily labour. This however does not mean that a Brahmin for instance is absolved from bodily labour, or the duty of protecting himself and others. His

* When, in the course of ages, the primitive classes petrified themselves into proud castes, the Upanishads raised protests.

birth makes a Brahman predominantly a man of knowledge, the fittest by heredity and training to impart it to others. There is nothing, again, to prevent the Sudra from acquiring all the knowledge he wishes. Only, he will best serve with his body and need not envy others their special qualities for service. But a Brahmin who claims superiority by right of knowledge falls and has no knowledge. Varnasrama Dharma is self-restraint, and conservation and economy of energy."

Varnasrama Dharma is based on self-abnegation and not on privilege. Let us not forget, beside that in the belief of the transmigration of soul Nature establishes a kind of equilibrium, in as much as in the course of successive lives a Brahmin made a Sudra and *vice versa*.

The question of the Pariahs has no relation to that of the other castes which are different in function but equal in status. We shall see with what burning passion Gandhi ceaselessly combat this social iniquity; and this is one of the most touching aspects of his apostolate. This iniquity is for Gandhi the shame of Hinduism, an abject debasement of the true doctrine, a blot, and this pains him deeply.

"I do not desire to be born again, but if I am really born again, I desire to be born amidst the untouchables, so as to share their difficulties and to work for their liberation."*

He adopted a small girl belonging to the untouchable class, and he speaks with exceeding

* 27th April 1921.

tenderness of this pretty little seven-year old creature which makes in his home the rain and the sunshine.

I have said enough to show that under the covering of the Credo there is a great evangelic heart. This is indeed a more tender Tolstoy, more easily satisfied, and, if I may say so, more "naturally" Christian (in the universal sense) than the Russian: for the latter is a Christian less by nature than by wish.

IV

It is in the condemnation expressed by Gandhi against Western civilisation that the influence of Tolstoy over Gandhi becomes most real.

Since the time of Rousseau, the arraignment of modern civilisation has been ceaselessly made by the most liberal minds of Europe. Awakened Asia has only to search in these records of arraignment for providing itself with a formidable weapon against its invaders. Gandhi himself has not failed to do this, and his "Hind Swaraj" enumerates a list of these books of denunciation, amongst which a good number is written by Englishmen themselves. But the irrefutable book is that which European civilisation has itself written in the blood of races oppressed, bled white, and outraged in the name of the chief sinners, and this same thing has been the astounding revelation of the hypocrisy, the rapacity and the ferocity, shamelessly displayed before the eyes of the world by the last war, called the war of civilisation. So great was Europe

shamelessness that she invited the peoples of Africa and of Asia to see her own nudity. They have seen it and judged it too.

“The last war has shown the satanic* character of the civilisation that dominates Europe to-day. Every canon of public morality has been broken by the victors in the name of virtue. No lie has been considered too foul to be uttered. The motive behind all crimes is grossly immoral. . . . Europe is not Christian. It adores Mammon.”†

Both in India and in Japan, such thoughts have been many times expressed, and even amongst those who are too prudent to proclaim such facts openly, this conviction is inscribed firmly in their hearts. And this is not the least ruinous consequence of the Pyrrhic Victory of 1918. Gandhi, however, had seen the true character of Western civilisation even before 1914. It had exhibited itself to him without any mask during the twenty years of his South African life. In his “Hind Swaraj” of 1908, he denounced modern civilisation as “the great evil.”

Civilisation, says Gandhi, is only that in name. It is, according to a Hindu expression, “the dark age.” It makes material greatness the sole aim of life. It makes the European dote upon the acquisition of wealth, enslaves him to it, and deprives him of all peace and interior life ; it is a hell for the weak

* This is a term which recurs often under the pen of Gandhi. 19th June 1921 *Young India*.

† 8th September 1920. *Young India*.

and for the labouring classes and it undermines the vitality of races. This satanic civilisation is bound to be soon consumed in its own fire. It is this civilisation which is the true enemy of India, more so than Englishmen themselves who are not individually evil-hearted but only frantic about their civilisation, being infected with its virus. Thus Gandhi combats the view of those of his compatriots who would like to drive away Englishmen from India and to make India "a civilised State, civilised in the modern sense". "This would be the nature of the tiger, without the tiger itself". No! The great and the only effort to be put forth should be directed against the civilisation of the West!

V

There are three classes of men whom Gandhi vehemently condemns: the lawyers, the doctors and the teachers.

His opposition to the last mentioned set is explicable because it is they that have made Indians unlearn their own language and thought, and have inflicted upon the Indian child a national degradation. Moreover, the school-masters pay no attention to heart and character, and deprecate manual labour. It is nothing less than a crime that a uniformly literary education is given to a people of whom 80 % are agriculturists and 10 % are industrialists. . . . The profession of a lawyer is an immoral one. The Courts in India form an instrument of British power, foment dissensions amongst

Indians and multiply quarrels and fights. They form an instrument for the exploitation of the evil instincts of man. So far as doctors are concerned Gandhi admits that he at first felt attracted towards their profession, but soon recognised that the profession was not an honourable one. The Western system of medicine only attempts to cure the body of its diseases, but never to extirpate the basic causes of these diseases which really are the passions and vices of man. It can even be said that the Western system encourages vice, because it enables the vicious-minded to lead vicious lives with the least possible risks. It demoralises people and renders them effeminate with its prescription of "black magic" * which turns the people's mind away from a heroic discipline of the body and soul. In the stead of this false system of medicine, Gandhi offers to us the true preventive system of medicine, the nature of which he has described in one of his small popular treatises, "A Guide to Health", a book based on twenty years of experience. This book is a treatise on morals as well as on therapeutics; "for disease is the result not only of our actions but also of our thoughts" and it is comparatively easy to give rules for the prevention of diseases because "all diseases have the same origin, viz., that one does not follow the natural laws of health." "The body is the abode of

* It cannot be forgotten that one of the chief grievances of Gandhi against European medicines is that it has recourse to vivisection "this blackest crime of man."

God and it should be kept pure and clean". There is a great deal of good sense in Gandhi's medical instructions, although there is an attitude of stubborn opposition to well-tested methods of treatment, and a Puritanical rigour in regard to morality. *

But the heart of modern civilisation (the 'Iron Age') is the machine. This monstrous idol has to be cast away. It is the fervent vow of Gandhi to see that India should be freed from servility to the machine. He would rather choose the slavery of India to the English market than favour the idea of Indian freedom accompanied by slavery to the Machine. "It were better for us to send money to Manchester than to multiply mills in India. An Indian Rockefeller would be no better than the American. The machine enslaves; races, money renders a man helpless like the sexual vice." ("Hind Swaraj".)

"But", ask the modern-minded Indians, "what will the state of India be without railways, trams and industries?" "Did she not get on in the past without these?" replies Gandhi.

"Since thousands of years India remains unshaken, alone, in the midst of the changing currents of empires. Everything else has passed away, but India has learnt to make the conquest of mastery over self and the knowledge of happiness. It has not wished to possess machinery and great cities. The old spinning wheel and the ancient

* Particularly in what concerns sexual relations where the severity of the doctrine reminds us of St. Paul.

indigenous education have ensured its wisdom and its good. We have now to get back to this ancient simplicity, not in one leap, but gradually and patiently, following the examples of individual leaders."

VI

This is the kernel of his thought and this is serious enough. It lays down the negation of Progress and also of European science.* This medieval faith runs the risk of coming into clash with the volcanic movement of the human spirit and of being shattered to pieces. But it would perhaps be prudent to say not "of the human spirit" but "of one human spirit"; for, if one can conceive—as I do—of the symphonic unity of the universal spirit, it is made up of many voices each of which follows its own path: and our youthful West carried away by its rhythm, does not think enough that it has not always led this symphony, that its law of progress is subject to eclipses, to contrary movements and recommencements and that the history of human civilisation is, more exactly, the history of civilisations and not merely of one civilisation alone.

* Gandhi tries to safeguard the necessity, in the absence of European science, of scientific researches. He admires the enthusiasm and the sacrifice of European Scientists, which qualities he regards to be often superior to the zeal and sacrifice of Hindu religious men. He respects the spirit that has animated Europe. He only attacks the path that this spirit has chosen for manifesting itself. Notwithstanding these reservations, Gandhi's opposition is clear and distinct and hence Tagore, as we shall see later, raises a just protest against the medievalism of Gandhi.

IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SATYA- GRAHA CAMPAIGN

WITHOUT discussing critically the European dogma of Progress, in merely considering the bare fact that the actual movement of the world is contrary to the great vow of Gandhi, we should not be led to suppose that the faith of Gandhi is going to be shattered. To think so would only be to misunderstand the oriental mind. Gobineau says that "the Asiatics are in all things much more obstinate than ourselves; if necessary, they wait for generations for the fulfilment of their hopes, and their ideas even after the lapse of such a long time never suffer from loss of vigour or enthusiasm." Centuries cannot frighten a Hindu. Just as Gandhi is ready to welcome success for his efforts within one year, he is equally ready to wait for it for centuries together, if necessary. He does not wish to hasten time, and if time itself slackens pace, he also does the same. If he finds India insufficiently prepared to understand and practise the radical reforms which he wishes to be introduced in the land, then he knows how to adapt his course of

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ction to possibilities. We cannot at all be astonished to hear this irreconcilable enemy of machinery say, in 1921 :

“ I would not deplore the disappearance of machinery but I have no hatred actually against machines,” or further : “ The law of complete love (without exception or restriction), is the law of my existence. But I do not want this law to be universally applied to all political measures which extol . . . That would be to condemn ourselves in advance to rebuffs and defeats. It would not be reasonable to expect the rabble to conform scrupulously to this law. . . . ”

“ I am not a visionary, I claim to be a practical idealist.” (11th August 1920.) Gandhi's description of himself is correct. He demands from men only what they can give, but he does demand from them all they can possibly give, and this is indeed a great thing in India whose people are large in numbers,* rich in traditions and rich too in the development of the soul. Between this people and Gandhi, from the first moment of contact, there has existed perfect harmony, and they have understood each other without any outward expression of their feelings. Gandhi knows what he can expect from them, and the people also know what he will demand of them. Between the two, the bond of connection is first and foremost, “ Swaraj ” or Home Rule for India.

“ I know,” writes Gandhi, “ that Swaraj is the aim of the nation and not non-violence.”

* A fifth of the population of the globe.

And he even adds the following words which really stupefy us with wonder:

“I would rather see India freed by violence than see her chained to slavery by the violence of her oppressors.” But he soon corrects himself: “This is to suppose the impossible, for violence can never free India, and Swaraj can never be attained without the forces of the soul which form the proper weapon of India, the weapon of love, the force of truth, Satyagraha.”

Gandhi's stroke of genius consists in his having revealed to the people of India the true nature and the concealed strength of this formidable weapon.

I

The term “Satyagraha” had been framed by Gandhi in South Africa for distinguishing his course of action from “Passive Resistance.” It is necessary to insist with all the greater force on this distinction, because it is precisely by the term “Passive Resistance” or “Non-Resistance” that the Europeans describe Gandhi's movement. Nothing can be farther from the truth. No one in the world has greater aversion towards passivity than this indefatigable fighter, who represents one of the most heroic types of ‘resisters.’ The soul of his movement is “active resistance” by means of the inflamed energy of love, faith and sacrifice. This triple energy is expressed in the word ‘Satyagraha.’

Let not the coward come to screen his poltroonery under the shade of Gandhi. Gandhi would chase him away from his community. Better far the violent-spirited man than the craven coward.

“Between cowardice and violence I will choose violence. I cultivate the calm courage to die without killing, but I desire that he who does not possess this courage should cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than that he should flee from danger disgracefully: for he who flees commits mental violence. He flees because he has not the courage to suffer death. . . . I would certainly desire violence in preference to the emasculation of a whole race.* . . . But I know that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, that to pardon is manlier than to punish. To refrain from punishing is pardon only when there exists the power to punish. I do not consider India to be powerless. A few thousands of Englishmen cannot frighten away three hundred millions of human beings. . . . Besides, force does not consist in physical strength; it resides in an indomitable will. . . . Non-violence is not a benevolent submission to the evil-doer. Non-violence resists with all the force of the soul the will of the tyrant. One single man can thus defy an empire and bring about its downfall.”

But at what price? At the cost of his suffering—Suffering, the great law.

“The indispensable condition of life comes from death.† The growth of corn involves the death of the seed. None can ever hope to rise without fulfilling this eternal law of purification through suffering. . . . Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress. . . . Non-violence is conscious suffering. . . . I have ventured to place before India the ancient law of self sacrifice, the law of suffering. The Rishis who

* 4th and 11th August, 1920. 11th October 20, 1921.

† March 9, 1920.

discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence were greater geneuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realised their uselessness. . . . The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. It is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit. . . . I wish that India may practise this law of Non-violence. I wish that she acquires a full knowledge of the power of this law. India has a soul which cannot perish. This soul can defy all the material forces of the whole world. . . . If India should ever fail to appreciate and understand this law, I shall retire into the solitudes of Himalayas. . . .” (6th April 1921).

But he never despairs. He believed in India when in February 1919 he decided to open his campaign of Satyagraha,—a weapon whose strength he had sufficiently tested in the agrarian disputes of 1918.

There was no thought of a political revolt yet. Gandhi is still a loyalist, and he will continue to be one, as long as he has a glimmer of hope in the loyalty of England. Till January 1920, he defended—and the Indian Nationalists have blamed him for it—the principle of co-operation with the empire.* In this first year of opposition to the Government of India, he could assure Lord Hunter in all sincerity that the followers of Satyagraha would be the most

* Gandhi refers to these criticisms and considers them in an article in *Young India* of November 17, 1921.

constitutional subjects of the Government. Certainly nothing short of a shallow stubbornness of the Government of India, could have compelled the great moral guide of India to break asunder the contract of loyalty to which he felt himself bound.

II

Thus Satyagraha appears at the beginning as constitutional opposition to the Government which has passed an unjust law. The Satyagrahis, who in ordinary times are law-abiding, deliberately disobey dishonourable laws, and if this is not sufficient for the restitution of justice, they reserve to themselves the liberty of extending this disobedience to such an extent as to adopt complete non-co-operation with the State. How different is this dis-obedience from our Western conception of the word? What an extraordinary accent of religious heroism exists herein!

The Satyagrahis are forbidden to employ violence against their adversaries—for it has to be admitted that the adversary is also sincere; what appears truth to one might appear as error to another and violence never carries conviction. Satyagrahis have to conquer their adversaries by the radiance of love emanating from their convictions, by their self-denial, and by their sufferings cheerfully and joyfully accepted. This is indeed a propaganda, which can hardly be resisted. It is by this propaganda that the Cross of Christ and of his

* *C. F.* 9th June 1920.

small troop of disciples has conquered a great empire. In order to bring to light the religious enthusiasm of a people who offered themselves to be sacrificed for the sake of justice and liberty, the Mahatma enjoined a *hartal* for all India by fixing the 6th April 1919 as a day of prayer and fasting. This was his first act, and this act touched the most profound portion of the conscience of the people. It had an unexpected effect. For the first time, all the classes of India united themselves in one single effort. India for the first time re-discovered herself.

Almost everywhere there was calm. At Delhi alone there was some trouble.* Gandhi went over there for making clear to the people their duties, but the Government arrested him in the train and had him taken back to Bombay. The news of the arrest of Gandhi evoked popular riots in the Punjab. There were some murders and lootings in Amritsar. General Dyer arrived with his troops during the night of the 11th April and occupied the town. Order had been restored everywhere. The 13th was a day of great Hindu festival. The populace assembled in a place called Jallianwala Bagh. It was peaceful and was composed of many women and children. General Dyer had, during the preceding night, prohibited all meetings, but nobody knew yet of the prohibition. The General came with machine guns to Jallianwala Bagh. Thirty minutes after the arrival of the troops, without any warnings, fire

* 30th March 1919.

was opened on the defenceless crowd. It lasted for ten minutes till the ammunition ran short. The place was surrounded by high walls. Flight from the place was impossible. Five or six hundred Hindus were killed, and a greater number wounded. Nobody paid any attention to the dead and the wounded. Martial law was proclaimed in the land. A regime of terror shook Punjab to the core. Aeroplanes threw bombs over unarmed crowds. The most honourable citizens of the land were hauled up before the military tribunals, whipped, forced to crawl on their bellies and subjected to shameful humiliations. It appeared as if an epidemic of folly had attacked the English rulers, as if the law of non-violence proclaimed by India had its first effect in exasperating the violent men of Europe to the point of frenzy ! Gandhi did not fail to foresee this. He had not promised to lead his countrymen to victory through a white and thornless road. The day of Jallianwalla Bagh was the day of baptism.

“We must be prepared to contemplate with equanimity not a thousand murders of innocent men and women, but many thousands, before we attain a status in the world that shall not be surpassed by any nation. Let each man regard hanging as an ordinary affair of life.”*

Military censorship succeeded in preventing the news of the horrors of Punjab from reaching outside.† But when the news gradually tri-

* 7th April 1920.

† Gandhi, for his part, suspended his movement on 18th April 1919 to prevent its being exploited by the revolutionaries.

led through, a wave of indignation passed over the land and England itself was stirred. An enquiry was opened by a commission, presided over by Lord Hunter, and a parallel enquiry was instituted by the National Congress. It would have been the evident interest of the Government (all intelligent Englishmen knew it) to punish the authors of the massacre of Amritsar. Gandhi himself however did not demand it. Moved by a spirit of admirable moderation, he refused to ask for the punishment of General Dyer or of the other guilty officers. He was not rancorous or revengeful. He demanded only the recall of Dyer. But, "*Quos Deus ult perdere, prius dementat.*" . . . Before the conclusion of the work of the commission of enquiry, the Government of India hastened to pass an Indemnity Act which protected all officials. The guilty officers were not only continued in service, but were even rewarded.

III

India was in the midst of this trouble, when there happened a second incident much graver than the first, a flagrant violation of solemn promises given by the Chief of the British Government and this completed in destroying what little confidence India still had in the faith of Europeans.

The European war had presented to the Mussalmans of India a rude problem of conscience. They found themselves in the delicate position of owning loyalty to the empire and fidelity to their spiritual

chief, the Sultan of Turkey. They had sided with England only after having obtained the promise that she would not lay violent hands on the sovereignty of the Sultan or the Khalif. Mussalman opinion demanded that the Turks should possess European Turkey and that the Sultan should exercise, along with the control of the sacred places of Islam, the suzerainty over Arabia, such as it was defined by Mussalman scholars, with its provinces of Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. Lloyd George and the Viceroy of India had made formal promises to this effect. When the war terminated these promises were forgotten. In the course of the summer of 1919, the Indian Mussalmans, feeling uneasy about the crushing terms of the peace which had been formulated, began to grumble, and this was the beginning of the Khilafat agitation. This agitation commenced with a peaceful but imposing demonstration on the 17th October 1919, and was followed, a month after, by a Khilafat conference of all India at Delhi. Gandhi presided over it and, with a keen eye, he soon envisaged the Mussalman question as the most useful instrument for bringing about Hindu-Mussalman unity. This was indeed a great and serious problem. The British Government had always fomented the natural enmity between Hindus and Mussalmans, and Gandhi accuses them of having created this in a great degree. In any case they had done nothing to reduce it. The two religions sometimes came into clash with each other. The Hindus went singing

before mosques where silence was required, and the Mussalmans rarely failed to wound the feelings of the Hindu in his cult of the cow. Continual quarrels followed, and deepened the differences. The two peoples never mingled with each other. Inter-marriages and inter-dining were forbidden. The Government of India counted on the permanence of this quarrel and slept on. The voice of Gandhi, proclaiming union at the Khilafat conference, awakened it with a start. With a sincere spirit of generosity Gandhi declared that the Hindus should make common cause with the Muhammadans on behalf of the Khilafat.

“Hindus, Parsis, Christians or Jews, whoever we are, if we hope to live as one single nation, the interest of one member should be the interest of all. The only important consideration is the justice of the cause”.

Muhammadian blood had already mingled itself with that of the Hindus on the field of the Massacre of Amritsar. The Hindu-Mussalman alliance had to be strengthened, and this should be an alliance without conditions. The Muhammadans formed the hardiest portion of the Indian population and they were the first to decide on Non-co-operation in this Khilafat conference. Gandhi approved of it, but true to his spirit of moderation, he objected to the boycott of English goods, because he saw therein a mark of weakness and of vengeance. The second Khilafat Conference at Amritsar towards the end of December 1919, resolved to send a deput-

ation to Europe and to send an ultimatum to the Viceroy warning him of the serious consequences, if, in the formulation of peace, the wishes of India were trampled under foot. A third conference at Bombay in February 1920 issued a manifesto which denounced English politics and proclaimed the approaching storm.

IV

Gandhi saw the storm coming and, far from inviting it, he strove hard to stem it. In England, at last, the danger began to be understood, and the Government tried to meet the storm with slow concessions. An Indian Reform Act, based on the Montagu Chelmsford proposals, accorded to the people of India greater powers and responsibilities in the central and provincial administration. By a proclamation of the 24th December 1919, the King gave his assent to the reforms, invited the people and officials to accept the reforms, and directed the Viceroy to accord amnesty to the political prisoners. Gandhi, always touched by generous acts, counselled the acceptance of these reforms, although he judged them to be inadequate, but thought that they could be the starting point of fresh and greater reforms. After a hot discussion, Gandhi's view prevailed at the next session of the Indian National Congress.

But even this last hope was at last shattered like the others. The Viceroy did not exercise his clemency towards the political prisoners, but on the other hand several of them suffered execution, which

excited India all over. It became clear that the promises of reforms would only be a lure.

At this moment, 14th May 1920, India came to know of the conditions of the disastrous peace with Turkey. A message of the Viceroy recognised that although this peace might be painful to the Mussalmans, they should accept it with forbearance and resignation.

About the same time was published the official report of the commission of enquiry into the massacres of Amritsar, and this completely roused the indignation of India.

The die was cast; the last links were rent asunder. The Khilafat Committee adopted Gandhi's proposal of Non-co-operation on the 28th May 1920, and the Hindu-Mussalman Conference of Allahabad accepted it unanimously on the 30th June 1920, and prescribed to the Viceroy one month's time for satisfying the terms of the ultimatum. Gandhi himself wrote to the Viceroy, explaining to him why he had recourse to Non-co-operation. The reasons which he gives are noteworthy, for even at this last moment he shows a desire not to break with England, and hopes to make her repentant, by employing ordinary constitutional methods.

“The only course left open to one like me is to sever all connection with British rule, or if I still retained faith in the inherent superiority of the British constitution to all others at present in vogue, to adopt such means as will rectify the wrong done and thus restore confidence. I have not lost faith

in such superiority and that is why I have counselled resort to dis-obedience.”

It must now be apparent what a great citizen of the Empire had been lost to England on account of her blind pride.

THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

ON the 28th July 1920, Gandhi announced to India that the movement of Non-co-operation would be initiated on the 1st of August and he asked the people to observe, on the previous day (31st July 1920) a solemn *hartal* of preparation with fasting and prayers. Not the least trace of concern did he show for the anger of the Government, but he rather dreaded the fury of the populace and so he took precautions for the preservation of order and discipline amongst the masses.

“Effective non-co-operation depends upon complete organisation. Disorderliness comes from anger. There should be an entire absence of violence. Violence means in every case retrogression and a useless waste of innocent lives. . . . Above all, let order be maintained throughout the land.”

I

The programme of Non-co-operation had already been framed, during the two preceding months, by Gandhi and the Non-co-operation Committee. The following had been decided upon :

establish an atmosphere of peace, re-arrange our programme and not thinking of starting mass Civil Disobedience until we are sure of peace being maintained in spite of mass Civil Disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. . . . Let the opponents glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. . . .”

And Gandhi wished himself to espiate for the sin of others.

“I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. . . .”

He prescribed for himself, publicly, a five days fast. No body else was to imitate him ! He should alone undergo punishment, for he had been an unskillful surgeon : he should either throw up his hands and abdicate, or he should acquire a firmer experience. His fast was at once a punishment and penance for himself and for the guilty men of Chauri Chaura who had sinned, with probably his name on their lips. He wished to suffer alone for them but he advised them all to surrender themselves to the Government and make a clean breast of their crimes. They had terribly injured the cause which they wished to serve.

“I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence”.

IX

ARREST AND TRIAL

THE history of human conscience can show few pages so noble or so glorious. The moral effect of such an act was exceptionally overwhelming. But as a political move, it was disconcerting—Gandhi himself recognised that he might be judged to be politically absurd and foolish. Really, it was dangerous to make a people breathless with expectation for a bold political step, to strain their feelings to the utmost, to raise the hand for giving the signal and then let it fall, and, while the huge machine was already beginning to shake and vibrate with hope, to stop it suddenly thrice in the course of a year. Herein lay the great risk that the enthusiasm and hope may die out altogether!

When the Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 24th February, it was only after great opposition that the Bardoli resolutions were accepted. It was evident that a schism had developed itself amongst the non-co-operators. Gandhi wished that stricter organisation and severer discipline should be cultivated by them before they set out on their campaign, and he proposed a constructive pro-

programme of work. Many, however, were irritated over this policy of slowness; they protested against the order of suspension of Civil Disobedience, and said that the fervour of the people was being snuffed out by the slow and vacillating policy.

I

Nevertheless, Gandhi's wish was accepted in spite of opposition, but he mentally suffered very much. We knew that even those who supported him could not sincerely agree with him, and many who voted for him might even call him a "Dictator" behind his back.

"There is so much under-current of violence both, conscious and unconscious, that I was actually and generally praying for a disastrous defeat. I have always been in a minority. The reader does not know that in South Africa I started with practical unanimity, reached a minority of sixtyfour and then sixteen and went up again to a huge majority. The best and the most solid work was done in the wilderness of minority. I know that the only thing that the Government dread is this huge majority I am able to command. They little know that I dread even more than they. . . . A friend warned me against exploiting my dictatorship. . . . I have begun to wonder if I am not unconsciously allowing myself to be exploited. I confess that I have dread of it such as I never had before. . . . I have warned my friends of the Committee that I am incorrigible. I shall continue to confess blunders each time the people commit them.

"I am a sadder and, I hope, a wiser man to day. The only tyrant I accept in this world is 'the

still small voice within'. And even though I have the prospect of a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority. That to me is the only truthful position. I see that our non-violence is skin-deep. We are burning with indignation. The Government is feeding it by insensate acts. It seems almost as if the Government wants to see this land covered with murder, arson and rapine, in order to be able once more to claim exclusive ability to put them down. Non-violence seems therefore to be due merely to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is not a futile experiment which I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his fellow-being? Of what avail is it then, if I expose myself to death in the event of such a catastrophe coming to pass? . . . Let us be truthful. It is through 'show of force' that we wish to get Swaraj, let us drop non-violence and offer our violence as we may. It would be a manly, hearty and sober attitude—an attitude the world has long used for ages past. No one can then accuse us of the terrible charge of hypocrisy. . . . The majority are now bound not to rush to Civil Disobedience but to settle down to the quiet work of construction. . . . We have lost our foothold. If we do not take care we are likely to be drowned in the waves whose depth we do not know".

And, turning towards the opposite party, he says:

"Have you no faith in non-violence? Why?"

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And, turning towards the opposite party, he says:

"Have you no faith in non-violence? Why not

retire from the Congress, form a new party of your own, publish publicly your Credo, and let the land choose between our views? No equivocation. Be frank!"

A bitter but manly sorrow underlay these strong words. It was the night of the Garden of Olive and Gandhi was going to be arrested. . . . Who knows if at the bottom of his heart, he did not welcome this as a deliverance for him?

II

For a long time past he had been expecting to be arrested. He had made all preparations for it from the 10th November 1920. He had even given instructions to the people as to their future line of action after his arrest. He dealt with the same point in a new article* on the 9th March 1922, when the news of his impending arrest was being bruited abroad. He said he had no fear for violence on the part of the Government, but he dreaded popular fury. He said that he would certainly be dishonoured by the latter.

"Let the people regard the day of my arrest as a day of rejoicing. The Government believes that when once Gandhi is arrested, the struggle with India will be over. Show to the Government that it is not so! Let it measure and know the strength of the people!"

The greatest mark of honour that the people can show to him is to preserve perfect calm

* *If I am arrested.*

Gandhi would feel humiliated to think that the Government hesitated to arrest him because it feared popular violence and bloodshed. Let the people keep cool and calm, let them not suspend their work, but let there be no meetings. Courts of law should be shunned, Government service should be abandoned, official educational institutions should be deserted, and the constructive programme of Non-co-operation should be entirely carried out with order and discipline. If the people of India acted thus, victory was near, otherwise India would be crushed.

Everything being ready, Gandhi retired to his favourite Ashram at Sabarmati for receiving, in the midst of his disciples, those who would arrest him. He gladly courted the prison. He expected that in his absence the faith of India would manifest itself better. And *he*,—he would find a repose which he very sadly needed.

III

On the evening of the 10th of March, some time after the prayer-hour, police officials arrived and the Ashram was at once informed of it. The Mahatma surrendered himself into their hands. On his way to the prison he met Maulana Hasrat Mohani, his Muhammadan friend who had run up from a distance just in time to embrace him. He was conducted to the jail with the publisher of *Young India*, Mr. Banker. Mrs. Gandhi had permission to accompany him as far as the prison-door.

On the afternoon of the 18th of March, opened the "Great trial" before the District and Sessions Judge of Ahmedabad. The trial was conducted with great fairness and nobility. The judge and the accused vied with each other in the display of chivalrous courtesy. Never during this struggle did England show greater magnanimity and impartiality than during this trial. The Judge, C. N. Broomfield, redeemed that day many of the faults of the Government. The story of the trial published by Gandhi's friends has been partially reproduced in the European press and echoes of it have reached France also. I shall only recapitulate these facts.

Why did the Government of India resolve to arrest Gandhi? After having hesitated for two years, why should the Government have chosen, for arrest, precisely that moment when the Mahatma was trying to bridle the passions of the rabble and when his personality seemed to be the only barrier to violence on the part of the people? Was it due to mere aberration? Or did it only justify Gandhi's terrible words: "It appears that the Government desires to see this country covered with murders, rapine and incendiarism, so as to have a pretext to exact measures of repression?" Really the Government's position was a difficult one. The Government respected and dreaded Gandhi. It would have liked to treat him with tenderness, but Gandhi would never have reciprocated the feeling so long as the Government refused to satisfy his demands. The Mahatma condemned

violence, but his non-violence was more revolutionary than all violence. At the same time when he suspended the Mass Civil Disobedience movement on the 23rd February, he had published one of his most fiery and threatening articles. An insolent telegram from Lord Birkenhead and Mr Montagu had impudently defied the Indian people to their very face, * and Gandhi, in a fit of indignation, retorted vehemently:

“How can there be any compromise whilst the British Empire is based on organised exploitation of physically weaker races of the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force? . . . It cannot live if there is a just God ruling the Universe. . . . It is high time that the British people were made to realise that the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years. . . . I pray that God will give India sufficient humility and sufficient strength to remain non-violent to the end. Submission to the insolent challenges that are cabled out on due occasions is now an utter impossibility.”

IV

It was on this article and on two others that the prosecution of Gandhi was founded. Gandhi was

* The cable ran thus: “If the existence of our Empire were challenged, the discharge of responsibilities of the British Government in India prevented and demands were made in the mistaken belief that we contemplated retreat from India, she would not challenge with success the most determined people in the world, who would once again answer the challenge with all the vigour and determination of its command.”

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"I wanted to avoid violence. I want to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth, when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it and I am therefore here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge, is, as I am just going to say in my statement, either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people."

After this bold oral statement where the heroic firmness of the political leader stands in perfect

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accused of "having incited the people to disaffection and preached hatred and contempt against the Government of His Majesty established by law." He did not defend himself. He pleaded guilty to all the charges.

The Advocate-General, Sir J. T. Strangman, said that the three articles referred to in the charges did not stand alone, but formed part of a campaign pursued against the Government for two years, and he read extracts from Gandhi's articles. He recognised the great qualities of the accused, but said that the danger resulting from such writings was greater. He ascribed to Gandhi the sanguinary events at Bombay and Chauri Chaura. Gandhi preached Non-violence and disaffection. He was responsible for all the violence of the people.

Gandhi then wished to make a statement. All his qualms of conscience, all his fears and doubts of the last few weeks about the propriety and justice of the policy which he had been obliged to pursue, and about the effect which it would have on the minds of the people,—all these had disappeared. He had once again resumed serene mastery over his soul. He accepted all that had happened, and all that would happen hereafter, as a necessity which he might regret but which none the less he considered it his duty to acquiesce in. He agreed with the Advocate-General. Yes! He was responsible entirely so! He preached disaffection and it was with him a passion! He took upon himself the whole blame for the troubles of Madras, for the

diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura and the senseless outrages at Bombay.

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harmony with the scruples of his religious conscience, Gandhi read a written statement which was addressed to the public of India and England. "He owes it to them," he says, "why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator he has become an uncompromising disaffectionist and Non-co-operator." He recapitulated the story of his public life since 1893. He recounted all that he had to suffer, as an Indian, from the English Government recapitulated his efforts extending over twenty five years to improve the condition of Indians in the obstinate hope that he would be able to effect this without detaching India from the British Empire. Till 1919, he had championed co-operation, but the outrages and the crimes of the Government went beyond all measure. "And the Government instead of repairing the wrongs done has, by a supreme defiance hurled at the conscience of India, honoured, pensioned and exalted the guilty men. The Government has itself broken all connection with its subjects!" Now, Gandhi was convinced that even the proposed reforms would be mortally injurious for India.

"The Government rests upon the exploitation of the masses and the laws are enacted for this object. The administration of law is prostituted for the sake of the exploiters. A subtle and sound system of terrorism has demoralised the people and taught them dissimulation. India is ruined, famished and degraded to such an extent that some of India's best men have thought that generations should elapse before India can achieve Dominion

Status. No past Government of India had done as much evil to India as England. Non-co-operation with crime and sin is a duty."

Gandhi has achieved this. But whereas hitherto violence was the main instrument resorted to, he has conferred on his people the sovereign weapon of Non-violence.

V

Then begins the chivalrous passage at arms between Mr. Broomsfield and the Mahatma.

The following is the full text of the judgment:

"Mr. Gandhi, you have made my task easy in one way by pleading guilty to the charge. Nevertheless, what remains, namely, the determination of a just sentence, is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless, it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that, in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and of even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to judge or criticise you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law, who by his own admission has broken the law and committed what to an ordinary man must appear to be grave offence against the State. I do not forget that you have consistently preached against violence and that you

have on many occasions, as I am willing to believe, done much to prevent violence. But having regard to the nature of your political teaching and the nature of many of those to whom it was addressed, how you could have continued to believe that violence would not be the inevitable consequence, it passes my capacity to understand.

“There are probably few people in India, who do not sincerely regret that you should have made it impossible for any government to leave you at liberty. But it is so. I am trying to balance what is due to you against what appears to me to be necessary in the interest of the public, and I propose in passing sentence to follow the precedent of a case in many respects similar to this case, that was decided some twelve years ago, I mean the case against Bal Gangadhar Tilak under the same section. The sentence that was passed upon him as it finally stood was a sentence of simple imprisonment for six years. You will not consider it unreasonable, I think, that you should be classed with Mr. Tilak, *i.e.*, a sentence of two years simple imprisonment on each count of the charge; six years in all, which I feel it my duty to pass upon you, and I should like to say in doing so that, if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I.”

“The Judge to Mr. Banker: I assume you have been to a large extent under the influence of your chief. The sentence that I propose to pass upon you is simple imprisonment for six months on each of the first two counts, that is to say, simple imprisonment for one year and a fine of a thousand rupees on the third count, with six months simple imprisonment in default.”

Gandhi, in an equally courteous way, replies :

“ I would say one word. Since you have done me the honour of recalling the trial of the late Lokananya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, I just want to say that I consider it to be the proudest privilege and honour to be associated with his name. So far as the sentence itself is concerned, I certainly consider that it is as light as any judge would inflict on me, and so far as the whole proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy.”

VI

Thus finished the great trial. Hundreds of Gandhi's friends and admirers fell weeping at his feet and paid their respectful homage to him. The Mahatma with a smiling face took leave of them. And the doors of the Sabarmati prison closed on him.*

* Mrs. Kasturibai Gandhi publicly announced the sentence to men and women of India in a very dignified message which requested them to concentrate all their efforts on the const programme of Gandhi.

Gandhi was not retained in the Sabarmati prison, but he was transferred to Yerravada.

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It must now be apparent what a great citizen of the Empire had been lost to England on account of her blind pride.

V

THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

ON the 28th July 1920, Gandhi announced to India that the movement of Non-co-operation would be initiated on the 1st of August and he asked the people to observe, on the previous day (31st July 1920) a solemn *hartal* of preparation with fasting and prayers. Not the least trace of concern did he show for the anger of the Government, but he rather dreaded the fury of the populace and so he took precautions for the preservation of order and discipline amongst the masses.

“Effective non-co-operation depends upon complete organisation. Disorderliness comes from anger. There should be an entire absence of violence. Violence means in every case retrogression and useless waste of innocent lives. . . . Above all let order be maintained throughout the land.”

I

The programme of Non-co-operation had already been framed, during the two preceding months, by Gandhi and the Non-co-operation Committee. The following had been decided upon:

- (1) Surrender of all titles of honour and honorary offices.
- (2) Non-participation in Government loans.
- (3) Suspension by lawyers of practice and settlement of civil disputes by arbitration.
- (4) Boycott of Government schools by parents.
- (5) Boycott of the Reformed Councils.
- (6) Non-participation in Government parties and such other functions.
- (7) Refusal to accept any civil or military post.
- (8) Propagation of Swadeshi*, i.e., according to the negative portion of the Programme, the new order of things on which new India is to be constructed. We shall deal with it later on.

This was only the first step: the extraordinary prudence of this man who sets in motion the huge machine of Hindu revolt is remarkable and would certainly astonish European revolutionaries. There was no question here of "Civil Disobedience". Gandhi knew well the nature of Civil Disobedience. He had studied it in the writings of Thoreau from which he extracts quotations in his articles. He took great care to distinguish it from Non-co-operation. Civil Disobedience is more than a mere refusal to obey, it is a positive violation of laws. "It is an infraction of laws which can be practised only by a chosen few, whereas Non-Co-operation

* Swa = Self. Desh = land. National Independence. The votaries of Non-co-operation understand it in the restricted sense of "Economic Independence". But we shall see later on what "Social Gospel" was framed out of it by the disciples of Gandhi. (*The Gospel of Swadeshi*).

can and ought to be a mass movement." Gandhi indeed wished to train up the people of India for Civil Disobedience, but only by gradual steps. He knew that they were then only insufficiently prepared, and did not therefore like to loosen the bridle before he was certain that the people had gained sufficient self-mastery. In this first programme of Non-co-operation there was no question of the refusal of payment of taxes. Gandhi bided his time.

II

On the 1st August he gave the signal for movement by a famous letter to the Viceroy. He returned along with this letter his decorations and titles of honour.

"It is not without a pang that I return the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal granted to me by your predecessor for my humanitarian work in South Africa, the Zulu War medal granted in South Africa for my services as an officer of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps and the Boer war medal for my services as Assistant Superintendent of the corps of Stretcher-bearers in 1899-90" "But", continues he, after recalling the events of the Punjab and those which have furnished the motive for the Khilafat movement, "I can retain neither respect nor affection for a government tainted with this kind of immorality and injustice. . . . It must be made to retrace its steps." Gandhi also expressed the hope that the Viceroy would in consultation with the people make reparation for the past iniquities and wrongs.

The example of Gandhi was at once followed in all parts of India. Hundreds of lawyers and judicial officers sent in their letters of resignation. Thousands of students left the Colleges. Courts of justice were boycotted. The schools became empty. The Indian National Congress, at a special session in Calcutta, approved of Gandhi's decisions by a large majority. Gandhi and his friend Maulana Shaukat Ali toured through the land amidst great enthusiasm. Never did Gandhi display a greater capacity for leadership than during these first months of action. Violence had to be bridled. The anarchical violence of the mob was always a thing of horror to him. He bitterly condemned Mobocracy,* which appeared to him to be the greatest danger for India. He detests war as no other man does but if he were confronted with the choice, he would certainly prefer war to the unloosening of Calibans. "If India has to achieve her freedom by violence, she will have to do it by disciplined and honourable violence. In no case shall we have the rule of the mob!"†

He is distrustful even of the joyous and boisterous demonstrations which might give birth to frenzy and unnameable actions. "Order should be made to develop out of this chaos. The people's law must come in the place of the rule of the populace." This great mystic with sharp observing eyes, whose robust practical common sense is in no way inferior

* What Karl Marx termed "Voyoucratie"

† 8th September 1920.

to that of our great European mystics, our organisers of religious orders and masters of souls, prescribed rules for enabling popular manifestations to be diverted along proper channels.

“One great mistake is that we have neglected music. Music means rhythm, order. Its effect is electrical. Unfortunately, music has been the prerogative of the few. It has never been nationalised. I would make compulsory a proper singing, in company, of popular songs. And to that end, I should have great musicians attending every congress or conference and teaching mass music.”

Then there is a list of rules for guidance:

“(1) There should be no raw volunteers accepted for big demonstrations. Therefore none but the most experienced should be at the head. (2) Volunteers should have a list of general instructions on their persons. (3) They should enjoin on the crowds perfect obedience to the volunteers. (4) They should specify the national cries and the precise time when they could be shouted out. (5) The crowd should not obstruct public roads and should be prevented from crowding in railway stations.”

In short, Gandhi made himself the orchestral chief of this vast multitude of men.

“The most difficult task for the nation is to discipline its manifestations”.*

The mob resorts to violence only at occasional intervals, acts in a frenzy and abandons itself to sudden outbursts of feeling. One body of Hindu thought which failed to understand either the true character of Gandhi's principle or its political

* 8th and 24th September and 20th October 1920.

efficacy advocated deliberate violence. Gandhi received anonymous letters begging him not to oppose violence. These letters (how audaciously insulting they were!) expressed the cynical belief that his words were only a pretence to deceive the enemy, and they implored him to give the signal for the combat. Gandhi vehemently and passionately replied to these letters. In three admirable articles, he controverts the "doctrine of the sword." He denies that the Hindu scriptures and the Koran have ever preached violence. Violence is not the *Credo* of any religion. Jesus is the prince among passive resisters. The Bhagavad Gita does not teach violence but only the accomplishment of one's duty even at the risk of one's life.* Mahatma does not possess the power of creation. . . . Now then can he possess the right to destroy? We have to love even our enemies, which, however, does not mean that we should tolerate evil. Gandhi would be ready to nurse General Dyer himself if the latter fell ill, but if his own son lived a life of shame his (Gandhi's) love would require him to withhold all help from his son, even at the risk of his son's death. We have no right to overcome evil by force, but we should resist it by separating ourselves from it at all hazards. And when the enemy shows signs of repentance, we should open our arms to embrace him.†

* Such is at least the interpretation of Gandhi. Will a European be bold enough to say that he sees in Bhagavad Gita a serene indifference to violence committed and suffered?

† 25th August 1920.

At the same time, Gandhi does not fail to enhearten the weak and the vacillating. He gives re-assuring advice to those who quail and retire before direct action.

“Nothing has been accomplished on earth without direct action. I have rejected the words ‘Passive Resistance’ on account of their insufficiency . . . It is direct action which has made a convert of General Smuts. What is the grandest synthesis in life that Christ and Buddha have realised? It is that of force and gentleness. Buddha carried the war into the enemy’s camp and made the priesthood bow down to him. Christ chased away the merchants and money-changers of the temple, and condemned the Pharisees and the hypocrites. This is the most intense form of direct action. . . and at the same time behind their action, lay an infinite softness.”*

The heart and the reason of Englishmen† should also be appealed to. He calls them his “dear friends”; he reminds them that he has been for thirty years their faithful companion, he requests them to make amends for the perfidious acts of their Government.

“The treachery of the Government has broken my faith in it. But I have still faith in British courage. India can now display only moral bravery. Non-co-operation is self-sacrifice. I wish to conquer you by my sufferings.”

III

His campaign for the last four to five months was aimed not only at paralysing the English Government by the principle of Non-acceptance but also at organising a New India, capable of maintaining a self-sufficient existence and of creating for itself, morally and materially, an independent sphere of activity. The first step was to ensure for India economic independence. This is what Gandhi calls by the name of "Swadeshi". (Or rather this is the most immediate and the most practical amongst the many meanings of the word).

Evidently it was necessary that India should learn to forgo many material comforts and accept many sacrifices. A salubrious discipline, a necessary hygienic course was essential for India. The health of the race as well as of its moral laws would only benefit thereby. First and foremost, India had to be freed from the "malediction of the bottle." Temperance groups should be formed, European wines should be boycotted, and the wine-sellers should be persuaded to give up their licenses*. India understood and responded to the call of the Mahatma. A wave of temperance passed over the land. Gandhi had himself to interfere in many places to prevent the mob from the forcible closing

* In his letter to the Parsis who are great traders, Gandhi exhorts them to close their shops. In his letter to the Moderates he asks them, they do not agree with him in regard to the rest of his programme, support his efforts on this point. At the same time he also opposes the trade in drugs such as opium and other intoxicants.

of liquor-shops. "It is not permissible to make people pure by force".

If it was a relatively easy matter to destroy the scourge of drink, it was not so easy to make India economically self-sufficing. How could she feed herself? If European goods were rejected, how could she clothe herself? Gandhi's prescription was an extremely simple one, and here all the medieval tendency of his nature became evident. He required that the old domestic industry of the Charka should be re-introduced into all Indian homes.

This partriarchal solution for a social question has been ridiculed and derided.* The peculiar conditions in India and the exact meaning which Gandhi gives to this term, warrant the utility of Gandhi's prescription. He never claimed that spinning would provide a sufficient means of subsistence for any except for the extremely poor: he only said that spinning should be an auxiliary industry, which could be resorted to whenever the operations of agriculture remained suspended. The problem is not merely a theoretical one but it is a poignant and urgent one. 80 % of the population of India are agriculturists and have no work during four months in the year, and a tenth of the population is ordinarily famished. The middle class is underfed. England has done nothing to ameliorate this

* Gandhi himself knows that he will be laughed at. But he maintains that the Charka has lost nothing of its utility at the present day. It is actually a national necessity, the sole resource for millions of

condition but on the other hand has only aggravated. The English Companies have ruined local industries, pumped dry the resources of India, and they drain away 60 millions of rupees annually from India. This land, which produces all the cotton necessary for its own use, exports most of its cotton to Japan and Lancashire whence it returns to her in the shape of manufactured cloth. Obviously it is the duty of India to learn to do without this ruinous help of foreigners and organise her own work-shops. India has now to take measures to assure food and clothing to everyone and her children. For the attainment of this end, there is nothing more prompt and more economical than the old Hindu cottage industry of spinning and weaving. The agriculturist classes need not be disturbed from their work, but the vagrants and the unemployed, on the one hand, and the women and children on the other could very well employ their time in spinning and weaving. Besides, all Indians can employ their leisure time in doing the same work. Gandhi laid down the following rules :

- (1) Boycott of all foreign cloth,
- (2) Revival and Propagation of spinning,
- (3) Taking of the vow that only such home-spun stuff would be worn.

Gandhi devoted himself to this work with an extinguishable ardour. He required that spinning* should be accepted by all India as a duty, that it

* 2nd February 1921.

should be taught in schools, that poor infants should pay for their education by doing spinning work and that all men and women should devote every day an hour of their leisure time to this work. He enters into the most minute details, gives technical instructions on cotton, yarn, the various operations of weaving, and practical instructions to weavers, buyers, parents and students. He shows, school-master-like, how, with a small capital, a gain of 10% can be realised by opening a Swadeshi shop or ware-house. He grows ecstatic when he describes the music of the Charka*, that most ancient machine in India, which afforded delightful work to the weaving poet Kabir and to the great emperor Aurangazib who made his own caps. He succeeded in rousing public opinion. At Bombay ladies belonging to respectable families began to use the Charka. Hindus and Mussalmans alike vowed that they would dress themselves only in Khadi. Even Rabindranath recognised evidence of good taste in it. Orders for Khaddar poured in, even from distant Baluchistan and Aden.

This enthusiasm slightly overstepped proper bounds when the question of the boycott of foreign goods cropped up, and Gandhi himself, normally a master of his feelings, appeared to have lost his usual steadiness. He ordered foreign clothes to be burnt down as emblems of slavery : and at Bombay in August 1921, as in the days of Savonarola, *Christo regnante*, on the Place de-la-Seigneurie, was

seen the sight of huge burning piles of splendid household wearing-stuff. One of the noblest Englishmen in India, C. F. Andrews, Rabindranath Tagore's friend, wrote to Gandhi of whom he was an intimate personal friend a pathetic letter deploring that the clothes were being burnt away instead of being given to the poor and that thereby the evil destructive tendencies of men were being pandered to. Andrews raised his voice against this nationalism which is a new form of violence, for destruction of the fruit of labour is always a crime. Andrews who had at first accepted the views of Gandhi even so far as to wear Khaddar, now began to feel doubts, and the sight of these burning piles slightly shook his faith in the principle in which he had till then believed. But Gandhi who gave publicity to this letter and replied to it in affectionate terms, touched by this outpouring of an anguished heart, declared that he regretted nothing. He bore (he said) no animosity against any race whatsoever, and never demanded the destruction of all foreign objects, but only of those which positively worked evil. Millions of Indians had been ruined by English manufactures, many had been degraded to the rank of *Pariahs* or of mercenary soldiers and their women had been forced to live lives of shame. The stuff which was tainted with all this guilt could not be worn without contamination. As the people of India had been hitherto only too much inclined to hate the English exploiters of India, he diverted popular anger "from the men to the things." The

criminal taint attached not only to the Englishmen who had sold this stuff, but also to all Indians who purchased it. These clothes were burnt away not on account of any hatred but only as a sign of repentance. That was a necessary surgical operation. It would be unbecoming to give this soiled tainted stuff to the poor, for the latter too have their honour.

IV

It would not be enough if material life alone were freed from foreign slavery. The soul should equally be liberated. Gandhi desired that his country should throw off the yoke of European culture, and one of his most strenuous efforts was to lay the cornerstones for a really proper Indian education.

There still existed in India a few universities and colleges which had conserved, under English tutelage, some sparks of ancient Asiatic culture. For forty-five years, Aligarh had been the centre of Islamic culture in India. The Khalsa college was the centre of Sikh culture and the Hindus had a university at Benares. But these institutions were under the control of the British Government which gave them financial aid. Gandhi would very gladly have abolished them and substituted fresh and purer institutions in their stead. In November 1920 he inaugurated the national university of Guzerat at Ahmedabad. This institution was inspired by the ideals of a united India. Its two

religious pillars were the Hindu Dharma and the Islamic faith. It claimed to rescue the Indian dialects from decay and make them the source of national regeneration. Gandhi justly considers, and we can profit by his words*, "that a systematic study of Asiatic cultures is not less essential to a complete education than the study of Western Sciences. The vast treasures of Sanskrit and Arabic, Persian Pali and Maghadi, should be explored so that the secrets of national strength might be discovered. But our system ought not to be a mere repetition of what had been said or done in the past. A new culture should be constructed on the foundations of the past, enriched by the experience of centuries. It ought to be a synthesis of the different civilisations which have influenced India and have become naturalised here. The synthesis cannot be formed after the American model where one dominant culture absorbs and destroys all the rest. Each culture will have its legitimate place in our system. Our object is harmony and not a mere external unity brought about by force." The students will have to study all Indian religions. The Hindus should familiarise themselves with the Koran and the Mussulmans with the Shastras. The National University excludes nothing but "the spirit of exclusion." In the whole of humanity there could be no "untouchables". The study of Hindustani will be compulsory, this being the true

* 17th November 1920.

national language, composed of Sanskrit, Hindi and Persianised Urdu.*

The intellectual class will receive professional training, and the others will receive literary education. Thus will the differences of class be attenuated. The spirit of independence will be kept up not only by the theoretical teaching studies but also by what Gandhi calls a "vocational education." As against the European education which undervalues manual labour and devotes exclusive attention to the training up of the head, Gandhi wishes that manual labour should be introduced into all schools from the infant classes upwards. The child should pay for its education by work in the shape of spinning, and should thereby learn, without delay, to eke out its livelihood and maintain an independent existence. The whole structure of the education of the heart has also to be built up. Before the character of the pupils is shaped the character of the teachers themselves has to be formed.

This is the object of certain superior Institutions which would form the crown of the arch or vault of modern education: these institutions, like the great monasteries, of Western Benedectines and "religious pioneers of the earth and the soul", are, much more than schools, real convents where the sacred fire of

* English is not excluded, nor is any [other European language, but these languages are reserved for higher study at the end of the school course. Vernaculars are employed for all university degrees. Gandhi dreams of a superior state of universal existence where all differences harmonise with unity not as "divisions" but "like the facets of the same precious stone."

India is fed, and developed, in order that it may be propagated outside.

V

We know the rules which Gandhi framed for the Satyagraha Ashram at Ahmedabad, his favourite institution. The rules relate more to teachers than to pupils, and they are intended to bind down the former with monastic vows. Whereas, in ordinary convents, these vows in course of time only have the character of negative discipline, they are in Gandhi's Ashram ever palpitating with the spirit of sacrifice and pure love which animates saints. The teachers have to conform to the following principles :

1. *The Vow of Truth* : It is not enough that one ordinarily does not resort to untruth ; one ought to know that no deception may be practised even for the good of the country, that Truth may require opposition to one's parents and elders. Consider the example of Prahlad.

2. *The Vow of Ahimsa (Non-killing)* : It is not enough not to take the life of any living being. The follower of this Vow may not hurt even those whom he believes to be unjust ; he may not be angry with them, he must love them : thus he would oppose the tyranny whether of parents, governments or others, but will never hurt the tyrant. The follower of Truth and Ahimsa will conquer the tyrant's will but he will suffer punishment even unto death for disobeying his will until the tyrant himself is conquered.

3. *The Vow of Celibacy* : It is well nigh impossible to observe the foregoing two Vows unless celibacy is also observed ; for this vow it is not enough that one does not look upon another woman with a lustful eye, he has so to control his animal passions that they will not be moved even in thought : If he is married, he will not have a carnal mind regarding his wife but, considering her as his life-long friend, will establish with her the relationship of perfect purity.

4. *Control of the Palate* : Until one has overcome the pleasures of the palate, it is difficult to observe the foregoing Vows, more especially that of celibacy. Control of the Palate is therefore treated as a separate observance. One desirous of serving the country will believe that eating is necessary only for sustaining the body ; he will, therefore, daily regulate and purify his diet and will either gradually or immediately in accordance with his ability leave off such foods as may tend to stimulate animal passions or are otherwise unnecessary.

5. *The Vow of Non-stealing* : It is not enough not to steal what is commonly considered as other men's property. It is theft if we use articles which we do not really need. Nature provides from day to day just enough and no more for our daily needs.

6. *The Vow of Non-possession* : It is not enough not to possess and keep much, but it is necessary not to keep anything which may not be absolutely necessary for our bodily wants : thus if one can do

Contemporaneously they have also to undergo training in agriculture and hand-spinning. It goes without saying that a religious spirit envelopes the whole system of instruction. When the course of studies is at an end, the young men have to choose between two alternatives: either to take vows like their elders or to leave the institution. The whole instruction is given free.

VI

I have dwelt a little long on this educative programme so as to show that the high spirituality of Gandhi's movement and the ideals of Gandhi form the basis of the system. For creating a new India, new, strong and pure souls genuinely Indian in character, have to be created. And for this purpose, a sacred legion of apostles who, like those of Christ, should be the salt of the earth, have to be formed. Gandhi is not, like our European revolutionaries, a mere maker of laws and decrees. He is the Creator of a new Humanity.

VI

INDIA UNDER GANDHI'S LEAD

THE English Government, like all governments in the circumstances narrated in the previous chapter, had, naturally, not realised the full importance of what was happening in India. Its first move was full of an ironical contempt born of a feeling of superiority. In August 1920, the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford said that "of all absurdities, this new movement was the most absurd." From this region of comfortable disdain the Government of India had soon to descend. Feeling troubled already but still uncertain, the Government published on the 6th November 1920, a paternalistic communique, in threatening terms, which said that as the promoters of the movement preached abstention from violence, the Government had not chosen to initiate any criminal proceedings but that such proceedings would certainly be taken against all those who exceeded proper limits and resorted to violence or armed disobedience.

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without chairs, one should do so. The follower of this vow will, therefore, by constantly thinking thereover to simplify his life.

Subsidiary Observances: Two observances are deduced from the foregoing.

i. *Swadeshi*: It is inconsistent with Truth to use articles about which or about whose makers there is a possibility of deception. Therefore, for instance a votary of Truth will not use articles manufactured in the mills of Manchester, Germany or India, for he does not know that there is no deception about them. Moreover, labourers suffer much in the mills. Use of fire in the mills causes enormous destruction of life besides killing labourers before their time. Foreign goods and goods made by means of complicated machinery are, therefore, tabooed to a votary of Ahimsa. Further reflection will show that use of such goods will involve a breach of the vows of non-stealing and non-possession. We wear foreign goods in preference to simple goods made in our own hand looms because custom attributes greater beauty to them. Artificial beautifying of the body is a hindrance to a Brahmachari; he will, therefore, avoid the use of any but the simplest goods. Therefore, the vow of Swadeshi requires the use of simple and simply made clothing to the exclusion of even buttons, foreign cuts, etc. and so will Swadeshi be applied to every department of life.

ii. *Fearlessness*: He who is acted upon by fear can hardly follow Truth or Ahimsa. Managers

will, therefore, endeavour to be free from the fear of kings, people, caste, families, thieves, robbers, ferocious animals such as tigers and even death. A truly fearless man will defend himself against others by truth-force or soul-force.

The character of the teachers has first to be forged on such an anvil. Gandhi passes rapidly over the other rules the most striking amongst which are that the teachers should set the personal example of manual labour (preferably labour of some agricultural type) and that they ought to learn the principal languages of India.

With regard to children, once they enter the Ashram (and they can be admitted after they are four years old) they are also bound to conform to certain rules till they depart from the institution, and the course of studies lasts for about 10 years. They are separated from their parents who give up all control over them. Children do not visit their parents, they wear a simple kind of dress, eat plain food which is strictly vegetarian, and they are not given any leave in the usual sense but are allowed a day and a half every week for personal work, and three months in a year for a journey on foot across India. The study of Hindi and a Dravidian language is compulsory for all. Besides they should learn English as an additional language and the characters of five Indian languages (Urdu, Bengali, Telugu and Devanagiri). The children are taught, in their respective vernaculars, history, geography, mathematics, economical sciences, and Sanscrit

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the people but by the Government. The movement had soon assumed a disquieting development : a in December 1920, occurred an incident of exceptional gravity. Non-violent Non-co-operation had till then only a provisional or tentative character and the Government had flattered itself with the hope that the general Indian assembly session would abrogate and veto the whole idea of Non-co-operation. But, on the contrary, the Congress at Nagpur incorporated in the constitution of the Congress, as the first article of law :

“ Article I. The object of the National Congress is to secure Swaraj for the people by all pacific and legitimate means ”.

This Congress approved of the idea and programme of Non-co-operation already framed and amplified the principle by emphasising the aspect of Non-violence demonstrating the necessity, if victory had to be attained, of a complete harmony of relationship amongst all sections of the people especially between the Hindus and the Muhammadans, and between the privileged and the sub-merged classes. Besides, the Nagpur Session introduced basic changes in the Constitution of the Congress, which definitely established a representative regime of all the parties in India* ?

The Congress did not conceal the fact that actual Non-co-operation was only the first step in this great fight. It announced that complete non-

* The nature and work of the Nagpur Congress are detailed in *Young India* of 30th March, 1921.

association with the Government and refusal to pay taxes would be vigorously resorted to at a time to be fixed later on. In the meantime, effective steps to prepare the country for the struggle were to be taken, by preaching boycott and hand-spinning and by appealing to parents, students and judicial officers and lawyers. These latter were called upon to practise Non-co-operation with greater zeal. Those who refused to obey these directions were to be excluded from public life.

This was indeed the creation of a State within a State, an Imperium in Imperio—a real Indian state in the face of the Britannic Government. The latter could remain inactive no longer. It had to conciliate or to fight. A real alliance between the people and the Government was still possible if only a little of the conciliating spirit existed. The Congress had definitely declared that it would attain its object “in co-operation with England, if the latter allowed it, otherwise without her”. As is usual in the policy of European states towards other races, a spirit of violence carried the Britannic Government off its feet. Pretexts to employ violence were sought after, and, as is to be expected, these were not wanting too.

II

In spite of the vow of Non-violence affirmed by Gandhi and the Congress, there occurred in various parts of India a few grave disturbances which however had only a remote connection with the

Non-co-operation movement. There were agrarian troubles in the United Provinces, tenant revolts against landlords, in which the police had to interfere forcibly, and with sanguinary results. Then again the Sikh Akali movement, at first purely religious in character, employed Non-co-operation methods, and this led, in February 1921, to the massacre of two hundred Sikhs. These things could in no way, reasonably or with good faith, be ascribed to Gandhi. The opportunity however was an excellent one for the Government. Repression commenced at the beginning of March 1921 and continued with increasing severity till the end of the year. The Government had, for initiating action, found a pretext in the picketting of the liquor-shops. This was not the first time when alcoholism and European civilisation went hand in hand. Organizations of volunteers were prohibited. A law was promulgated against seditious meetings. In several provinces, *carte blanche* was given to the local Governments and to the police to sweep away the movement which was described as anarchical and revolutionary. Thousands of Indians were arrested and no regard was shown to respectable men. Naturally these repressive measures provoked riots, and resulted here and there, in clashes between the police and the people, murders and incendiarism. The Committee of the National Congress met at Bezwada to discuss whether Civil Disobedience should be proclaimed and it decided, with a rare wisdom, that the country was not yet

sufficiently ripe or disciplined for employing this double-edged weapon. The Committee resolved to wait and organize a civil and financial mobilisation.

III

Gandhi resumed with greater enthusiasm his campaign for Indian unity and for religious, racial, and caste unity. To the³ rich Parsi traders * who were more or less tainted with the spirit of Rockefeller, Gandhi appealed to bestir themselves on behalf of the national cause. Hindu-Muslim unity was ceaselessly menaced by ancient prejudices, fears and mutual suspicions. Gandhi devoted himself whole-heartedly to achieving this unity, not indeed seeking to establish an impracticable fusion of the two races which he would not have desired, but only a solid alliance based on friendship.†

Gandhi's most vigorous effort now was to improve the condition of the submerged classes. His passionate vindication of the rights of Pariahs, his cries of indignation and of sorrow against this monstrous social iniquity would alone

* 23rd March 1921.

† Gandhi cites as an instance his friendship with the Mussalman Maulana Mahomed Ali and says that both of them would continue faithful to their respective religions. Although he might not give his daughter in marriage to the sons of Ali brothers and might not inter-dine with them, they would still bear mutual esteem and love. Gandhi does not condemn inter-marriages or inter-dining between Hindus and Mussalmans but he thinks that it might take some time before these reforms could be accepted by the masses. He does not oppose them, but he regards them as premature. Here his practical sense of realities makes itself evident.

Non-co-operation movement. There were agrarian troubles in the United Provinces, tenant revolts against landlords, in which the police had to interfere forcibly, and with sanguinary results. Then again the Sikh Akali movement, at first purely religious in character, employed Non-co-operation methods, and this led, in February 1921, to the massacre of two hundred Sikhs. These things could in no way, reasonably or with good faith, be ascribed to Gandhi. The opportunity however was an excellent one for the Government. Repression commenced at the beginning of March 1921 and continued with increasing severity till the end of the year. The Government had, for initiating action, found a pretext in the picketting of the liquor-shops. This was not the first time when alcoholism and European civilisation went hand in hand. Organizations of volunteers were prohibited. A law was promulgated against seditious meetings. In several provinces, *carte blanche* was given to the local Governments and to the police to sweep away the movement which was described as anarchical and revolutionary. Thousands of Indian were arrested and no regard was shown to respectable men. Naturally these repressive measures provoked riots, and resulted here and there, in clashes between the police and the people, murders and incendiarism. The Committee of the National Congress met at Bezwada to discuss whether Civil Disobedience should be proclaimed and it decided with a rare wisdom, that the country was not yet

sufficiently ripe or disciplined for employing this double-edged weapon. The Committee resolved to wait and organize a civil and financial mobilisation.

III

Gandhi resumed with greater enthusiasm his campaign for Indian unity and for religious, racial, and caste unity. To the[‡] rich Parsi traders* who were more or less tainted with the spirit of Rockefeller, Gandhi appealed to bestir themselves on behalf of the national cause. Hindu-Muslim unity was ceaselessly menaced by ancient prejudices, fears and mutual suspicions. Gandhi devoted himself whole-heartedly to achieving this unity, not indeed seeking to establish an impracticable fusion of the two races which he would not have desired, but only a solid alliance based on friendship.†

Gandhi's most vigorous effort now was to improve the condition of the submerged classes. His passionate vindication of the rights of Pariahs, his cries of indignation and of sorrow against this monstrous social iniquity would alone

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first duty is to protect the feeble and not to outrage human conscience. We are no better than brutes so long as we are soiled by this sin. Swaraj should signalise the reign of justice every where on earth.”*

Gandhi desired that a national legislature should ameliorate the condition of the Pariahs as soon as possible and grant them a large number of schools and tanks. His impatience, which did not allow him to wait with folded hands in expectation of a move on the part of the privileged classes for repairing the injury to the Pariahs, drove him into the camp of the Pariahs. He became their leader; he organised them, he closely examined and discussed the possible methods of action. Were they to appeal to the Government? That would only be a change of slavery. Were they to reject Hinduism? (Note how generously audacious this staunch Hindu believer is!) Were they to become converts to Christianity or Muhammadanism? Gandhi would certainly have counselled them to do it if untouchability was really a doctrine of Hinduism but he was convinced that it was only an excrescence to be extirpated. The Pariahs ought to organise themselves for the defence of their own rights. They should employ the weapon of Non-co-operation against Hinduism by severing all connection with other Hindus—(a piece of advice singularly brave in the mouth of this patriot!). The Pariahs, however, (continues Gandhi), are not capable of an

* 27th October 1920, 27th April 1921.

Even on the eve of his arrest he was busy with this question and he talked about the progress of his efforts. Brahmans devoted themselves to this noble cause. The privileged classes gave touching examples of repentance and fraternal love.

IV

Gandhi championed, with not less nobility, the cause of women also.

The feminine question is particularly grave in India where an excessive ill-regulated sensuality marks all sexual relations. Child-marriages prematurely exhaust the physical and moral energy of the nation. Carnality is a perpetual obsession and feminine dignity is humiliated thereby. Gandhi published accounts of the sorrows of women relating to the degrading way in which they were considered and treated by nationalist Hindus*. He recognised the truth of these charges and described the evil as a plague which was as serious as untouchability. But he added that the problem was also a universal one. As in the case of the Pariahs, here too he expects reforms to be achieved more through the efforts of the injured than by any other means. He addresses himself to women in general and calls upon them to compel man to respect them by refusing to be regarded as the objects of man's appetite. Let women take part resolutely in politics and let them suffer all the risks and dangers thereof. Let them not only give

* 21st July 1921, 6th October 1920.

up all luxury by casting away and burning all foreign clothes, let them also share the hardships of men ! Already a few distinguished women had been imprisoned in Calcutta. That is a sign of hope. Let them, instead of clamouring for favourable treatment, vie with men in endurance and privation. Women can easily surpass man on this earth. Let them not shrink in fear : Even the weakest of women can preserve her honour. Let her only learn to die* !

Nor did Gandhi forget " our fallen sisters† ". He relates conversations which he held with many hundreds amongst them in Andhradesa and at Barisal. With what simple nobility does he speak to them, and with what hope do they confide in him. He advises them to take to the Charka as an honourable kind of work, and they promise to follow his advice from the next day onwards. And Gandhi, addressing himself to the men of India exhorts them to respect women :

" This gambling in vice has no place in our revolution. Swaraj means ability to regard every inhabitant of India as our brother and sister . . . The feminine sex is not the weaker sex, it is the nobler of the two ; for it is even to-day the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge. A woman's intuition has often proved truer than man's arrogant assumption of superior knowledge. "

* 21st July, 11th August, 15th December 1921.

† This is the title of one of the articles, " Our fallen Sisters ", 15 September 1921.

He found in the women of India, beginning from his own wife, a source of intelligent help and faithful assistance.

V

The year 1921 marks the zenith of Gandhi's activities. He wielded an immense moral strength and, without his having sought for it, he found himself to be entrusted with illimitable political power. The people believed him to be a Saint and began to idolise him as a God*. And in December 1921, the all India National Congress invested him with the fullest powers including the power to choose his successor. He became the undisputed leader of the Indian nation. He could now let loose political revolution or, if he wished it, inaugurate a great religious reform.

He did not choose the latter course nor did he desire it. Moral grandeur? Was it not rather moral timidity? Probably it was the one and the other at the same time. It is difficult for all (and specially for one belonging to a different civilisation) to penetrate into, and unravel a conscience, particularly when it is as profound and delicate as that of Gandhi. It is hard to estimate, in this whirlpool of facts which in this eventful year shook India in every sense, if the hand of the pilot had always been sure and steady and had directed it without fear or alter. But I shall attempt to give here what I have been able to understand in this living enigma, with

* Gandhi protests against such deification in *Young India* (June 1921.)

all the respect that I have for this great man, and with all the sincerity that I owe to his sincerity.

VI

If the power of Gandhi was great, the dangers in using his power were also equally great. As the public activities of Gandhi increased and as his propaganda stirred to action multitudes of men, it became more and more difficult for him to control the movement and to preserve for himself a state of equilibrium in this vast turbulent sea. It was indeed a superhuman task to reconcile moderation of soul and largeness of vision with these unchained mobs. The pilot, gentle and pious man that he was, fervently prayed to God and relied on His help. But the voice which came to him in response came to him mingled with the voice of the tempest raging around him. Would the same voice be heard by others ?

The danger that could least befall him was that of pride. No amount of adoration could turn his head. His sense of perfect humility was only pained thereby. This Gandhi is indeed a unique instance of immaculate sincerity in the history of prophets and great mystics, one who has no visions or revelations, no dogma and no set doctrine to preach. His face shows no signs of triumph, his heart no signs of vanity. He is and remains a man like all other men. . . . No ! He does not wish to be called a Saint. (And he becomes a Saint by the very modesty of his !)

“ The word ‘ Saint ’ (he says) should be removed from actual life: I pray like every good Hindu, I believe that we can all be messengers of God. I have no particular revelation from God. My firm belief is that God reveals himself to every human being; but we close our ears to the small internal voice. . . . I claim to be only a common labourer, a humble servant of India and humanity. . . . I have no desire to found sects. I try to represent and follow Truth such as I know it. I only shed light on many old truths ”.*

For himself, he is always modest, extremely scrupulous, personally incapable of all feeling of exclusiveness, never tolerating any tyranny even for a good cause. “ The slavery of the Government should not be replaced by the slavery of the Non-co-operators.”† Likewise, he refuses to prefer his land to other lands, and his patriotism is not limited strictly to India only. “ For me patriotism blends with humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. I am not in favour of exclusiveness. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no place in my scheme of life. A patriot is so much the less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian.” (16th March 1921.)

But have his disciples too been as modest and as large-minded as he? What shape does his doctrine assume in the hands of some of his disciples? And through them, in what form does it reach the multitude?

* May 12, 1920. May 25, July 13, August 25, 1921.

† December 8, 1920.

VII

GANDHI AND TAGORE

When Rabindranath Tagore, after a long tour in Europe, returned to India in August 1921, he was painfully struck with the change of outlook in Indian national politics. He had expressed his anxiety regarding this new development even earlier in a series of letters sent from Europe to his Indian friends, of which many were published in the "Modern Review".* It is necessary for us to deal with this difference of view between two great souls who bear mutual esteem and admiration but who are as much apart in their opinions as a sage can be from an apostle, or as Plato can be from Saint Paul. On the one side, we have the genius of faith and of charity, which wishes to be the leaven of a new humanity, and on the other, the genius of intelligence, free, vast and serene, which comprehends the totality of all existences.

* In addition to these controversial articles, we know that Tagore had, after his return to India, a personal interview with Gandhi. Nobody has published an account of the interview. Both Tagore and Gandhi appear to have agreed to keep it secret.

Tagore has always acknowledged the saintliness of Gandhi and I have heard him speak to me with great veneration about Gandhi. When I referred to the resemblance of Tolstoy to the Mahatma, in the course of our conversation, Tagore expressed to me how much dearer Gandhi was to him (Tagore) and how much more glorious than Tolstoy Gandhi appeared to him to be—(now that I have come to know Gandhi better, I also am of the same opinion)—for everything in Gandhi is natural, simple, modest and pure; an air of serenity surrounds his very thoughts: Whereas in Tolstoy, pride fights against pride, anger against anger, everything is violent, not excepting even non-violence. Tagore wrote from London on the 10th April 1921: "We are indeed deeply beholden to Gandhi for his having given to India an occasion to prove that her faith in the existence of the divine spirit in man is still living." And in spite of the reservations which he had already expressed regarding the new movement, when he left France on his return voyage, he was disposed to offer assistance to the movement. Even the brilliant manifesto of Tagore of October 1921, "The Call of Truth" which brings out clearly the rupture between the opinions of the two great men, opens with the most magnificent eulogy ever written about Gandhi.

On his part, Gandhi showed affectionate respect towards Tagore and he was careful never to lack

this feeling of affectionate respect to his antagonists in the midst of their controversy. We feel that Gandhi is really pained to enter into a polemical fight with Tagore; and when a few friends tried to increase the heat of the controversy by tittle tattling, Gandhi reduced them to silence by reiterating that he and India owed to Tagore.*

It was indeed fatal that their differences of opinion became absolute and confirmed. Since the autumn of 1920, Tagore had regretted that Gandhi's excessive intensity of love and faith had been placed, after Tilak's death, in the service of politics. It was not with a glad heart that Gandhi himself resolved to enter politics but when Tilak was gone, India was in need of a political leader.

"If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us to-day like the coil of a snake from which we cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake. . . . I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics."

But Tagore deplored this necessity. He wrote on the 7th September 1920:

"All the moral fervour which Mahatma Gandhi represents and which he alone, of all men of the world, can represent, is necessary for us. It is

* Thus in one of his last articles, "Too sacred for publication," Gandhi says that his friendship with Tagore is not a new or recent one. He had sojourned more than once at Shantiniketan. He had permission to use Shantiniketan as a place of retreat and while he was in England his children were educated there.

indeed a misfortune for our land that so precious a treasure is put into the frail vessel of our politics and amidst the endless waves of mutual recriminations. . . . that the waste of our spiritual resources should also be allowed to happen on adventures that are wrong from the point of view of moral truth is heart breaking. It is criminal to turn moral force into a blind force."

He was induced to write these lines by the stormy beginnings of the Non-co-operation campaign and by the wild agitation in India carried on in the name of Khilafat and the crimes of the Punjab. He dreaded the effect of such an agitation on a population which is feeble and subject to fits of hysteric fury. He would rather have wished that these mobs were turned away from thoughts of vengeance or of impossible reparation and that the irreparable might be forgotten so that all persons might be free to think about the construction of the soul of a greater India. Notwithstanding his admiration for the living radiance of the spirit of sacrifice in the thoughts and activities of Gandhi, the element of negation which the new law of Non-co-operation contained in it was hateful to him. He felt horror towards all that said: *No!* And this furnished him an opportunity for contrasting the positive ideal of Brahmanism, the purification of the joys of life, with the negative Buddhistic ideal. To which Gandhi replied that the act of rejecting was no less necessary than that of acceptance. "Human effort is made of both. The last word in the Upanishads is a negation. And the definition of

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II

But undoubtedly Tagore desired to pluck nothing. His poetic contemplation can adapt itself to all things and can taste their harmony. He explains his position in language which shows rare beauty but an extreme detachment from action. It is really the dance of Nataraja who plays with his illusions :

"I am striving with all my power to tune my mood of mind to be in accord with the great feeling of excitement sweeping across my country. But, deep in my being, why is there this spirit of resistance maintaining its place in spite of my strong desire to remove it? I fail to find a clear answer and through my gloom of dejection breaks out a smile and a voice saying, "Your place is on 'the seashore of worlds', with children; there is your peace, and I am with you there." And this is why lately I have been playing with inventing new metres. These are merest nothings that are content to be borne away by the current of time dancing in the sun and laughing as they disappear. But while I play, the whole creation is amused, for are not flowers and leaves never-ending experiments in metre? Is not my God an eternal waster of time? He flings stars and planets in the whirlwind of changes, he floats paper boats of age, filled with his fancies, on the rushing stream of appearance. When I tease him and beg

him to allow me to remain his little follower and accept a few trifles of mine as the cargo of his play-boat, he smiles and I trot behind him catching the hem of his robe. But where am I among the crowd, pushed from behind, pressed from all sides? And what is this noise about me? If it is a song, then my own sitar can catch the tune and I join in the chorus, for I am a singer. But if it is a shout, then my voice is wrecked and I am lost in bewilderment. I have been trying all these days to find in it a melody, straining my ear, but the idea of Non-co-operation with its mighty volume of sound does not sing to me; its congregated menace of negation shouts. And I say to myself, "If you cannot keep step with your countrymen at this great crisis of their history, never say that you are right and the rest of them wrong; only give up your role as a soldier, go back to your corner as a poet, be ready to accept popular derision and disgrace*."

Thus would speak an Indian Goethe. It seems as if the last word has been said and that the poet has taken final leave of all positive action and has woven around him a web of creative enchantment. But no! Tagore says: "Fate has chosen me for directing the ship precisely against the current!" He was not solely a poet, he was, at this moment of his life, the spiritual ambassador of Asia in Europe and he came here to demand of Europe her help for the international university which he wished to found at Shantiniketan.

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between the Orient and the Occident at the time when, on the other side of the ocean, Non-co-operation is preached!"

The movement of Non-co-operation wounded him directly because it ran counter to this desire of his and to his intellectual faith. "I believe in the true union of the East and the West."

The idea of Non-co-operation was a source of pain to his rich intellect too, which was nourished by all the cultures of the world.

"This Infinite Personality of Man is not to be achieved in single individuals, but in one grand harmony of all human races. The darkness of egoism which will have to be destroyed is the egoism of the people. The idea of India is against the sense consciousness of the separateness of one's people from others, and which inevitably leads to ceaseless conflicts. Therefore my one prayer is, India stand for the co-operation of all peoples of the world. The spirit of rejection finds its support in the consciousness of separateness, the spirit of acceptance in the consciousness of unity. India has ever declared that Unity is Truth, and separateness is Maya. This unity is not a zero, it is that which comprehends all and therefore can never be reached through the path of negation. Our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from those of the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide. If in the spirit of national vaingloriousness we shout from our house-tops the West has produced nothing that has an infinite value for man, then we but create a serious cause of doubt about the worth of any product of the Eastern mind. . . . For it is mind that unites Man in the East and West which is ever approaching Truth in her different aspects from different

angles of vision ; and if it can be true that the standpoint of the West has betrayed it into an utter misdirection, then, we can never be sure of the standpoint of the East. Let us be rid of all false pride and rejoice at any lamp being lit at any corner of the world, knowing that it is a part of the common illumination of our house."

Like Goethe who in 1813 refused to hate French civilisation, Tagore too could never bring himself to demand the elimination of Western civilisation. And though he knew that Gandhi himself never wished it, he felt that the enraged passions of Indian nationalism might desire it. He dreaded the outcome of this barbarism of the soul.

"Our students are bringing their offering of sacrifices to what? Not to a fuller education but to non-education. . . . I remember the day, during the swadeshi movement in Bengal, when a crowd of young students came to see me in the first floor hall of our Vichitra house. They said to me that if I would order them to leave their schools and colleges they would instantly obey. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my motherland."

Now precisely in these days of the spring of 1921 when he learnt with great pain that English education was being boycotted in India, he was an eye witness, in London itself, to an aggressive display of this intellectual nationalism. At a meeting presided over by his friend, Pearson, certain Indian students gave vent to boisterous and unbecoming demonstrations. Tagore became indignant and in a letter to Shantiniketan, he attacked

this spirit of narrow intolerance, and held the Non-co-operation movement responsible for this state of affairs. Gandhi, in replying* to these charges, made his own reservations regarding the moral value of European education which failed to develop character and which had devitalised the youth of India, but he unreservedly condemned the brutalities and protested with all his liberty of soul.

“ My religion is not a religion of prison. It has a place for the least creation of God. It is closed only against pride of race, pride of religion and pride of colour.”

III

These are noble words. They do not, however, disarm Tagore's fears. He does not doubt Gandhi's sincerity but he fears the Gandhists or the followers of Gandhi. And from those first days when he landed back in India in August 1921, he felt suffocated by the blind belief and obedience of the followers to the faith of the master. He dreaded the approach of a mental despotism and in the “ Modern Review ” he published on the 1st October a veritable Manifesto, “ The Call of Truth ”, which boldly attacked this slave mentality. This protest is all the more striking because it is preceded by a brilliant eulogy of the personality and work of the Mahatma. Tagore, recalling the beginnings of the movement of Indian emancipation in 1907-08, says that then the vision of Indian political leaders had

* *The Poets Anxiety*, June 1, 1921.

remained bookish and had been receiving its inspiration from the shades of Burke, Gladstone, Mazzini, Garibaldi, incapable of going beyond these chosen few.

"At this juncture, Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the cottage door of the destitute, clad as one of themselves and talking to them in their own language. Here was the truth at last, not a mere quotation from a book. So the name of Mahatma given to him was a true name. Who else has felt so many men of India to be of his own flesh and blood? At the touch of Truth, the pent up forces of the soul are set free. As soon as true love stood at India's door, it flew open: all hesitation and holding-back vanished, Truth awakened Truth. All honour to the Mahatma who made visible to us the power of Truth. . . . When Lord Buddha voiced for the Truth of compassion for all living creatures which he had obtained as the fruit of his own self-discipline, the manhood of India was roused and poured itself forth in science and art and wealth of every kind. . . . It overflowed across ocean and desert. No commercial or military exploiter to-day has ever been able to do anything like it. Love alone is true. When love gives freedom it does so at the very centre of our life".

But this apotheosis suddenly stops. Deception follows.

"So in the expectation of breathing the buoyant breezes of this new-found freedom, I came home rejoicing. But what I found here depressed me. An oppressive atmosphere seemed to burden the land. Some outside compulsion seemed to be urging one and all to talk in the same strain, to work at the same mill. I found that those who had their doubts

as to the present activities felt some admonishing hand clutching them within. To-day in the atmosphere of the country there is a spirit of persecution which is not that of armed force but something still more alarming because it is invisible."

We know this anguish and this protest. They belong to all times. The last noble souls of the expiring antique world gave vent to the same feelings in the face of the Christian faith which gradually asserted its sway. We ourselves feel that such a sentiment of opposition or antipathy rises in us, in the face of those human tides which the blind flow of a faith, national or social, often causes. This is the eternal revolt of the free soul against ages of faith to which this faith itself might have given rise, for though faith is, for the minority of the elect, infinite liberty, it is for the mobs who acclaim and applaud it, only an additional chain of slavery.

IV

But Tagore's blame is directed not only against the fanaticism of the mobs. Over the heads of these people drunk with obedience, Tagore's darts fly at the Mahatma himself. However great Gandhi may be, does not the authority he assumes for himself exceed the energy of a single man? A great cause like that of India cannot be entrusted in the hands of a single master. The Mahatma is indeed the master of Truth and Love.

"But the golden rod which can awaken our country in Truth and Love is not a thing which

can be manufactured by the nearest goldsmith. The science and art of the building of Swaraj is a vast subject. Its pathways are difficult and take time. For this task, aspiration and emotion must be there, but no less must study and thought be there likewise. For it the economist must think, the mechanic must labour, the educationist and statesman must teach and contrive. In a word, the ground of the country must exert itself in all directions. Above all, the spirit of inquiry throughout the whole country must be kept intact and untrammelled, its mind not made timid or inactive by compulsion, open or secret."

Tagore appeals for the co-operation of all the free forces of the land.

"In the old forests of India, our Gurus in the fulness of their vision of truth had sent forth such a call. . . . Why should not our Guru of to-day, who could lead up on the paths of Karma, send forth such a call?

"But the Guru Gandhi has sent forth, to one and all, the unique call 'Spin and Weave!'. . .

"Is this the call of the New Age to new creation? If man can be stunted by big machines, the danger of his being stunted by small machines must not be lost sight of?"

It would not be enough if all the forces of the nation co-operated amongst themselves, these forces should co-operate with the force of the entire universe. "The awakening of India is connected with the awakening of the world. . . Henceforth all nations that shut themselves up in exclusion will

run against the spirit of the New Age". And Tagore, who recently spent a few years in Europe, evokes the remembrance of men whom he met there, those noble souls who have liberated the heart from the bonds of nationalism for devoting it to the service of humanity—this small persecuted minority of the universe—*Civis totius orbis*—whom he classes amongst Sannyasins, "those who have realised human unity in their soul".

"And are we alone to be content with telling the beads of negation, harping on others' faults and proceeding with the erection of Swaraj on a foundation of quarrelsomeness? Shall it not be our first duty in the Dawn to remember Him who is one, who is without distinction of class or colour and who with his varied Shakti makes true provision for the inherent need of each and every class, and to pray to the Giver of Wisdom to unite us all in right understanding?

V

These noble words, one of the noblest messages that a people has ever heard, tower superior to all human fights and struggles. The only criticism which can be made about them is that they tower too high above human quarrels. From the beginning of times, these words have been ringing true. The bird-poet, *the lark with the grandeur of an eagle* (as Heine said about a great musical giant of our days), sings over the ruins of Time. He lives in the Eternal. But the Present is pressing. The suffering of the Present requires the application of some immediate

remedy, however imperfect it may be. And on this point, Gandhi, who lacks the wings of Tagore, (or who, rather, like Bodhisattva of compassion, had given up all flight for living with the disinherited) finds it very easy to give a direct answer.

His reply this time was more passionate than it ever was in this noble joust. It appeared soon in "Young India", on the 13th October, and was extremely pathetic. Gandhi thanked the "Great Sentinel" for warning India against certain dangers. He agreed with Tagore on the necessity for a free judgment.

"I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love".

Tagore is a good sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance and Inertia. But Gandhi does not admit that the reproaches of Tagore are justified. "I have again and again appealed to reason and it is not correct to say that there exists a blind obedience in India. If the country has come to believe in the Charka, it is only after laborious thinking and great hesitation. Tagore speaks of patience and seems to be satisfied with beautiful words and songs. This is war! Let the poet lay aside his lyre, he can sing afterwards!

"When a house is on fire each one takes out a bucket to quench the fire. When all about me are dying

for want of food, the only occupation permissible to me is to feed the hungry. India is a house on fire. It is dying of hunger. . . . To a people famishing and idle the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. We must think of millions of Indians who are to-day less than animals, who are almost in a dying state. The spinning wheel is the reviving draught for the millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen. Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning wheel. . . . The poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their days food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching those who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realised. I have found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir. . . .

Give them work that they may have food! "Why should I who have need to work for food, spin?" may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket and you will realise the truth of what I write. . . . Let each man spin! If we will take care of to-day, God will take care of the

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95

God, and our strict duty is to conform to these. It would be a sin to disown them”.

It follows from these articles of faith that one should not concern oneself in any way with foreign lands.

“The devotee of Swadeshi never takes upon himself the duty of reforming the world for he knows that the world has hitherto moved and will hereafter move according to the fixed plans of God. . . . The true devotee of Swadeshi does not forget that every human being is his brother but he ought to do the duty which is prescribed for him by birth. . . . We should serve at all costs our other country. The emancipation of our soul should be sought only through our own religion and our own culture.”

Is it permissible for the nation to develop all its resources so as to become prosperous and strengthen its commerce and its industries? “By no means,” answers the gospeller. It is an unworthy desire to make India a manufacturing country. That would lead to the violation by other men of their Dharma. It is as criminal to export the products of our land as to import the products of other lands. For, “the proselytising spirit is repugnant to the principle of Swadeshi.” And the logical consequence (rather unexpected for European) of this law is that a land can no more export its ideas than its products. India's subjection to foreign domination for a long time is only an expiation for the remote crime of its ancestors who traded with Egypt and Rome—a crime repeated by succeeding generations also. Let each country

“God incarnates himself from age to age for the redemption of the world from the forces of evil, but it is by no means an invariable rule that he should appear in the shape of a human being. . . . He can do it as well in the shape of an abstract principle or some great idea which permeates the world. . . . And this new avatar is the Gospel of Swadeshi.”

The evangelist admits that this affirmation can be laughed at if we mean by Swadeshi only a boycott of foreign clothes. But really this question is only a minute practical aspect of a vast “religious principle, intended to free the whole world from hateful dissensions and emancipate humanity”. Its substance is contained in the Hindu sacred scriptures.

“One’s own Dharma, though void of merit is the best. The performance of Dharma not one’s own is always beset with danger. He alone attains prosperity who is intent on his own duty.”

This fundamental law of the Swadeshi rests on the faith in “a God who has eternally provided for the happiness of the universe. This God has given to each human being that *milieu* of environment which suits him for the accomplishment of his special task. All the actions of man ought to conform to his proper situation in life. Like our birth or our family, or our country, our culture also can never be chosen by us; we have only to accept what has been given us by God; we are bound to accept our traditions, as coming from

God, and our strict duty is to conform to these. It would be a sin to disown them”.

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and class confine itself to its own allotted work and live within its own resources and traditions!

“Let us not have intimate relations with those whose social customs are different from ours. One ought not to mix one’s life with that of men or of nations whose ideal is not in accord with ours. Every man is a streamlet, every nation is a river. They ought all to follow the course of their beds, pure and unsoiled, till they reach the sea of happiness where they all coalesce into one.”

This is the triumph of rampant Nationalism of the purest, but of the narrowest type. To remain in one’s own house within barred doors, changing nothing, conserving everything, neither selling nor buying anything but purifying oneself—this is indeed a medieval gospel of cloistered monks. And large-souled Gandhi accords his approbation to this!

VII

We can easily understand the startled shock which Tagore feels in the presence of such luminaries of reactionary nationalism who aspire to stop the course of centuries, clip the wings of the soaring soul, and to sever all connection with the

* Here and there, however, there are admirable moral counsels. No Vengeance: The past is irrecoverable and has become a part of eternity and human beings can do nothing against it. Do not think of reprisals for injustices and past offences. Let the dead past bury its dead: In the living present, let us act, with God and our hearts for our guides: From one end of the book to the other, there is a snow-white purity.

Test.* Indeed this is not the real thought or teaching of Gandhi. He has written to Tagore :

"Swadeshi is a message to the world. Non-co-operation is not directed against the West. It is against material civilisation and against the exploitation of the weak resulting therefrom. It is a retreat within ourselves but only a temporary one for gathering and accumulating our forces before placing them in the service of humanity. India should learn to live, before it can die for humanity."

Gandhi does not discard the co-operation of Europeans provided they conform to these salutary deals which he offers to all men.

All this genuine thought of Gandhi is infinitely larger, more human and more universal † than

* Tagore must have been all the more affected by such writings because people had begun to institute a comparison between Gandhi's Ashram (whence the 'Gospel' has been published) and the Shantiniketan Ashram. This is evident from an article of the 9th February 1922 in Young India where Gandhi disclaimed certain words containing unfavourable reflections on Shantiniketan, which had been attributed to him by a journalist. He reasserts his respect for Tagore's Ashram not without a concealed humour :

"If a comparison must be made at all, in spite of the early rising and discipline of Satyagrahashram, I would vote really and sincerely for Shantiniketan, as an elder brother". "But," he adds humourously, "the inmates of Shantiniketan must beware of the race that the little place in Guzerat is running."

† What I mean is that Gandhi is as much a universalist as Tagore but only in a different way. He is so by moral conscience, whereas Tagore is a universalist by intelligence. Gandhi excludes none from the communion of prayer and daily labour. Thus the apostle of early times also did not make any distinction between Jews and Gentiles but

that of the "Gospel" published under his approbation. Why does he allow his universal ideal to be shut up within the narrow limits of an Indian theocracy? Formidable disciples indeed! The purer they are, the more baneful they become. God preserve a great man from these friends who understand only a portion of his thought. In codifying it, they have destroyed its noble harmony which is the chief bounty of its living soul!

VIII

This is not all. Those at least who live very near the master, the direct disciples, breathe the atmosphere of his moral nobility. But those who are the disciples of these disciples and the others, the people who hear only deformed echoes of the Master's teaching, what can they appreciate in his doctrine of internal purification, and creative abnegation? The statement that Swaraj can be won by the Charka smacks of the chimerical. Add to this the theory of the negation of all progress, and of the spirit of exclusiveness, and it is no wonder at all that Tagore is alarmed at the violence which the apostles of Non-violence (and Gandhi is not exempt therefrom) shows, not towards the men of the West, but towards the things of the West. Gandhi might

on all he imposed the same moral discipline. The same thing is desired by Gandhi and herein consists his narrowness; not, however, in his heart which is as large as that of Christ but in the spirit of intellectual asceticism. Gandhi is a medieval universalist. With all veneration to the Mahatma, I am with Tagore.

very well say that he would retire from his campaign if he found in it the slightest trace of hatred towards Englishmen, that one should love those whom one is fighting, and should hate their acts of injustice, "hate Satanism while loving Satan himself:" but this task is too subtle and difficult a one for the ordinary human mind. When at every session of the Congress, the leaders of the movement passionately recall the crimes of Englishmen, the Khilafat wrongs and the Punjab wrongs, anger accumulates behind the flood-gates, and woe, woe when these floodgates open! When Gandhi presided over the burning of the clothes at Bombay in August 1921, and when he replied to the sorrowful epistle of Andrews, he believed "that he is transferring the rancour from men to things." But he did not see that the ill-will of the people only developed and that they thought in their own mind: "First the things, then comes the turn of men!" He did not foresee that in this same Bombay, three months hence, the mob would kill innocent men. He is too saintly, too pure, too much devoid of the base passions to see this. He hardly noted that these base passions were there before him, in the crowd which he addressed. Tagore, more clear-seeing, recognised the imprudence of non-co-operators who, while ceaselessly recalling (in all innocence), crimes committed by Europeans and professing non-violence themselves, unconsciously inoculated the popular mind with the virus of the fever which would lead the mob to commit acts of violence. They do no

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VIII

THE STORM BURSTS

THE whole of the year 1921, when the political activities quickened, was full of uncertainties, violent jolts and oscillations from whose influence even Gandhi did not remain free.

I

The movement of revolt developed and the brutal repressions of the Government only accelerated its rhythm. Bloody riots occurred at Malegaon, in the district of Nasik, and there were troubles at Giridih in Behar. At the beginning of May 1921, more serious incidents took place at Assam—about twelve thousand coolies, leaving their work in the tea plantation, were attacked by the Gurkha troops. The employees in the Railway and Steamship service in East Bengal completely struck work for two months as a mark of protest. Gandhi endeavoured again to play the role of conciliator; in May he had a long interview with the Viceroy Lord Reading and offered to mediate with the Ali Brothers who were accused of having made speeches tending to violence. He then obtained from his

suspect it, these apostles who feel no violence in their hearts. But he who incites others to action ought to consult not his own heart but the hearts of others! Beware of the people! *Cave canem!* For holding them in the leash the moral injunctions of a Gandhi alone would not suffice. If perhaps the master consented to become a God, then probably the masses might observe the austere discipline of the master himself. But Gandhi's sincerity and humility could never allow him to think of such a thing.

IX

Now, there remains but the single voice of the purest of men towering above the rumblings of a human ocean. How long would it be able to make itself heard? A vast and tragic hope indeed!

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friends a formal declaration that they would never make speeches tending to violence.

But the vigour of the movement in no way slackened and the Mussalman element in India continued to take the initiative of an increasingly bolder policy. On the 8th of July the Khilafat conference at Karachi, while reiterating the Muslim demands, declared it "illegal for any Mussalman to serve in the army or to help recruitment," and threatened the English Government, if it fought against the Angora Government, that the Muslims of India would proclaim Civil Disobedience and the Indian Republic. On the 28th July, the All India Congress Committee, meeting at Bombay (the first Congress elected under the new constitution), proclaimed that all should refrain from participating in any welcome to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, decided on the boycott of all foreign cloth by the 30th of September, and manufacture of Khaddar by stimulating hand-spinning and hand-weaving, and encouraged the campaign against drinks in spite of the opposition of the Government who protected those who frequented liquor-shops. But more prudent than the Khilafat Mussalmans, the Committee strongly condemned the troubles, disapproved for the time being of Civil Disobedience and pleaded strongly for the propagation of Non-violence.

II

In August there occurred a violent rising of the Moplahs which lasted for a number of months.

Gandhi, along with Maulana Mahomed Ali, wished to proceed to Malabar to pacify the people, but the Government refused permission and, in September, arrested a number of Muhammadan leaders, including Maulanas Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali for the crime of having passed seditious resolutions at the Khilafat conference. The Central Committee of the Khilafat and hundreds of other meetings at once repeated the resolution. On the 4th October, Gandhi also declared himself to be at one with his Muhammadan brothers. Along with fifty other eminent members of the Congress, he published a Manifesto which asserted the right of every citizen to express his opinion about non-participation, affirmed that it was improper for any Indian to serve, in a civil or a military capacity, a government which had caused the moral, economic and political degradation of India, and proclaimed it to be the duty of every one to refuse to associate with this Government. The Ali Brothers were condemned to rigorous imprisonment for two years. India replied with redoubled vigour in her political activities. The Committee of the National Congress took the decisive step; it authorised every province, under its own responsibility, to initiate Civil Disobedience and to begin with the non-payment of taxes. It prescribed, as preliminary conditions, that all resisters should take an oath of absolute adherence to the Swadeshi programme and Non-co-operation, including hand-spinning and the solemn vow of Non-violence. It attempted thus, under the

direction of Gandhi, to reconcile revolt with discipline and with the law of self-sacrifice. For properly stressing this latter point, the Committee informed the intending resisters that they need not count on pecuniary aid from the Congress for their families.

III

The great Disobedience commenced when on the 17th November the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay. The order of boycott was carried out by the middle and the inferior classes. The rich men, the Parsis and the officials, paid no heed to it. The populace assaulted them, and did not spare the women. The riots rapidly spread, houses were sacked, many were killed and wounded. This was the only brutal explosion in the whole of India where the prescribed hartal was religiously observed in peace without incidents. Gandhi was, as he said, "pierced as with an arrow by these troubles." On first hearing of the disorders, he rushed to the scene, where the rioters received him with acclamations which only increased his shame and sorrow. He rebuked the mob and asked them to disperse. He pointed out to them that Parsis had the right, if they wished it, to receive the Prince and that nothing could excuse unworthy methods of violence. The mob was hushed to silence, but troubles again flared forth in distant places. The worst elements of humanity had issued out of earth; twenty thousand infuriated men could not be reduced to silence all at

once. The riots were however only limited in character : even the least eventful of our revolutionary days can show a greater record of destruction and casualties. Gandhi issued desperate appeals to the public of Bombay and to the Non-co-operators. He said that such scenes rendered Civil Disobedience in masses impossible and he suspended it. For punishing himself for the violent acts of others, he imposed on himself a religious fast of 24 hours every week.

The Europeans in India had been less alarmed by the Bombay trouble than by the remarkable unanimity of the silent Hartal throughout the length and breadth of India. They required the Viceroy to act at once. A series of violent measures, which were not quite legal, was employed by the provincial governments. An old law of 1908 against anarchists and secret societies was revived and employed against the associations of volunteers. In response to this, thousands of fresh volunteers enrolled themselves. The Provincial Committees were asked to organise these volunteers and maintain strict discipline amongst them. A Hartal was fixed for the 24th December, the day of the Prince's visit to Calcutta, and on that day the Prince passed through a silent, sorrowing, deserted Calcutta.

In these days which appeared gradually to intensify the movement, the Indian National Congress assembled at Ahmedabad. It had all the touching solemnity of the *Etats Generaux*

of 1789. The President had been incarcerated. The speeches made were short. Besides reaffirming all the previous appeals of the Congress, this session invested Gandhi with all the powers of a *de facto* dictatorship over India, including the power of choosing his own successors. During the following few weeks extraordinary religious enthusiasm was displayed throughout India. 25,000 men and women joyously offered themselves to be arrested and imprisoned.

Again Gandhi made the preparations to issue the order of Civil Disobedience *en masse*. The signal was to be given in a model district in Bombay, Bardoli,* where his thoughts had taken the firmest hold. Gandhi announced it to the Viceroy in a letter which was a courteous but clear declaration of war. He gave seven days' time to Lord Reading for mending his policy, failing which the order would be given and the revolt would commence.†

IV

Hardly had the letter to the Viceroy been despatched when a scene, bloodier than any enacted before, occurred at Chauri Chaura. In the course of a procession, the police had attacked the mob. When the police found themselves attacked, they opened fire on the mob and took refuge in the Police

* 140 Villages; 87,000 inhabitants.

† A note of the same date in *Young India* announced the ultimatum. If the Viceroy did not reply favourably, Civil Disobdience, he said, should be continued at all cost even if it was opposed by the majority, Y. I. 4-9-22.

station. The infuriated populace burnt it down and killed the policemen.

No Non-co-operation Volunteers had taken part in it and Gandhi had every justification to disclaim all responsibility for the incident, but he had already by this time become the real conscience of India. The crime committed even by one single Indian pained him greatly and he gladly took upon himself the sins of his people. His disappointment was such that at once he ordered the suspension, for the second time, of the movement of Civil Disobedience. The situation now was much more painful than after the Bombay riots. How was he to retract his ultimatum to the Viceroy without incurring the risk of being ridiculed? Pride, "Satan" as he called it, attempted to dissuade him from doing it. But no! It was an additional reason which influenced him to publish a free and full confession.

On the 16th of February appeared in *Young India* one of the most extraordinary documents of this man's life, his great *mea culpa* or his public Confession.* In the midst of his mortification and sorrow the first voice that rises is one of jubilation thanking God for having humiliated him.

"God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which, and which alone, can justify Civil Disobedience *en masse*. He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam

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“I know,” continues Gandhi, “that this programme may be politically unsound but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound and the country will have gained by humiliation and confession of error. . . . The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to super-human powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wears and am therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of imperfections. . . . For, confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt. I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path. . . . It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued, only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is betrayed into violence. I have no doubt whatsoever on that account. The people of Bardoli are, in my opinion, the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. . . . Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. . . . Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. . . .

“In Civil Disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil Disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous through unperceived and gentle. . . . The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index finger. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-

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establish an atmosphere of peace, re-arrange our programme and not thinking of starting mass Civil Disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of mass Civil Disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. . . . Let the opponents glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. . . .”

And Gandhi wished himself to espiate for the sin of others.

“I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. . . .”

He prescribed for himself, publicly, a five days fast. No body else was to imitate him! He should alone undergo punishment, for he had been an unskillful surgeon: he should either throw up his hands and abdicate, or he should acquire a firmer experience. His fast was at once a punishment and penance for himself and for the guilty men of Chauri Chaura who had sinned, with probably his name on their lips. He wished to suffer alone for them but he advised them all to surrender themselves to the Government and make a clean breast of their crimes. They had terribly injured the cause which they wished to serve.

“I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent, or a precursor of violence”.

IX

ARREST AND TRIAL

THE history of human conscience can show few pages so noble or so glorious. The moral effect of such an act was exceptionally overwhelming. But as a political move, it was disconcerting—Gandhi himself recognised that he might be judged to be politically absurd and foolish. Really, it was dangerous to make a people breathless with expectation for a bold political step, to strain their feelings to the utmost, to raise the hand for giving the signal and then let it fall, and, while the huge machine was already beginning to shake and vibrate with hope, to stop it suddenly thrice in the course of a year. Herein lay the great risk that the enthusiasm and hope may die out altogether!

When the Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 24th February, it was only after great opposition that the Bardoli resolutions were accepted. It was evident that a schism had developed itself amongst the non-co-operators. Gandhi wished that stricter organisation and severer discipline should be cultivated by them before they set out on their campaign, and he proposed a constructive pro-

THE MESSAGE OF THE MAHATMA

THE great voice of the apostle is hushed now in the silence of the prison. His body is immured within a tomb, but never has a tomb been able to shut up or restrict the power of a noble thought. His invisible soul continues to animate the immense body of India. "Peace, non-violence and suffering"—this is the unique message which has come from the prison-house. The message has been heard and understood. The message has spread from one end of the land to the other. Three years ago, India might have been deluged in blood by the arrest of Gandhi. When in March 1920 constant rumours of his arrest flashed in the air, people became considerably agitated. The Ahmedabad sentence on the other hand was received with all the characteristic religious silence of India. Thousands offered themselves to be imprisoned, with feelings of peace and joy. An extraordinary example of Non-resistance showed to what depths the divine message had entered into the soul of the nation.

I

The Sikhs, as is well known, are one of the most war-like races of India, and they were employed in large numbers during the late war. In the course of the last year there arose a great schism or religious difference in their community. The reasons for this difference would appear insignificant to our European eyes. A religious renaissance amongst the Sikhs had given birth to the sect of Akalis who desired to purify the sanctuaries which had become the appanage of ill-reputed trustees who used to give up their possession of these sacred places. The Government, for legal reasons, took the side of these trustees and then there commenced, towards August 1922, the memorable daily martyrdom of the Gurukabagh. The Akalis adopted the doctrine of Non-resistance. A thousand men amongst them posted themselves near the Sanctuary, about four thousand in the Golden temple at Amritsar. Every day a hundred volunteers (most of them of military age, many having served in the late war itself), proceeded from the Golden temple after taking the vow not to use violence in deed or in word and to reach Gurukabagh or to be killed back therefrom senseless. From the other end of the thousand, twenty five Akalis took the same vow. Not far from the Sanctuary, the British Police awaited them in a bridge with baton-tipped batons. And daily there was enacted a fascinating scene which is described in an

unforgettable description of Andrews. The Akalis wearing black caps decorated with small garlands of white flowers advanced before the police and stopped at the distance of a few yards—silent, immobile and praying. The policemen beat them down with their long batons. The Sikhs rolled to the ground, rose up if they could, commenced again, were struck down again, and sometimes beaten into unconsciousness. Andrews hears not a cry and does not find the slightest attitude of defiance in these martyrs. Away at some distance a hundred spectators, their faces stretched with anguish prayed silently with “an expression of adoration and suffering.” “They remind me,” says Andrews, “of the shades of the Cross”. The Englishmen who related accounts of the incident in their journals were astonished at this display of suffering. They could not understand it, yet they regretfully acknowledged that this absurd sacrifice was a remarkable victory for the army of Non-co-operation and that the people of the Punjab had been fascinated by it. But the generous Andrews whose pure idealism has enabled him to unravel India's soul, saw here, as Goethe at Valmy, the beginning of a new era: “A new heroism, learnt by suffering had arisen on this earth: a new war of the soul. . . .”

II

The people themselves seem to have much better kept alive the Mahatma's thought than those leaders

who had been commissioned to guide and develop the Master's thought and teaching. Even before Gandhi's arrest, opposition had manifested itself in the Congress Committee at Delhi. This opposition was again renewed at Lucknow on the 7th of June 1922. Great dissatisfaction reigned, regarding the programme of patient construction and waiting, imposed by Gandhi. The desire to resort at once to Civil Disobedience asserted itself strongly. A Committee of Enquiry was deputed to ascertain if the country was ripe for Civil Disobedience. Its report was extremely disappointing. Not only did it record the actual impossibility of Civil Disobedience but a number of Commissioners (men of proved faith) desired that the Gandhist methods of Non-co-operation and of boycott of public functions, should be abandoned, that a Swaraj party should be formed in the heart of the Government Councils and that in short Non-co-operation should become a kind of parliamentary opposition. Thus Gandhi's doctrine was battered in breach from two directions, on the one hand by the advocates of violence and on the other by the champions of moderation.

But India protested against any such change as was proposed by this set of moderates. At the annual session of the Indian National Congress in 1922, at Gaya, India's fidelity to the persecuted master and to his faith in the doctrine of Non-co-operation was reaffirmed. By 1740 votes against 90, the Congress rejected the resolution for council entry. A proposal to boycott all English goods

was rejected as it was thought that this might alienate the sympathies of the labouring classes of Europe. More extreme in its views, as always, the Mussalman Khilafat Conference had voted for this boycott by a large majority.

III

It is at this point of the story that we have to break off. In spite of certain inevitable deviations, in the absence of the Master, and of his best disciples, the movement has during the first year of its guideless existence successfully stood the formidable test and boldly braved all dangers. The disillusionment expressed by the British press after the Gaya Conference shows well the importance of the success achieved *.

What will happen to this movement in the future? Will England, learning from her past faults not show herself cleverer in captivating this enthusiasm of a people? Will not the stead-fastness of the people wear itself out? Nations and peoples have

* An article by Blanche Watson in 'Unity', 16th November 1921 enumerates the advantages derived by India from the Non-Co-operation struggle. It says that the internal revenues of the land have diminished by about 75 millions dollars and that the boycott of English cloth has caused in one year a loss of 20 millions dollars to England. The number of the Indians who were imprisoned at this time is estimated at 30,000. The machinery of British administration is represented as having crumbled down. Miss Blanche Watson, a fervent admirer of the Gandhist doctrine, has surely an unconscious tendency to exaggerate the success of the movement. Other people do not appear to be so greatly satisfied with the results. They say that the movement of sacrifice hurts the egoism of the rich and the commercial

only short memories and I very much doubt if the people of India would ever remember the lessons of the Mahatma for any length of time, if these lessons

classes and that many cases of resignation from official service tendered in the first fit of enthusiasm, have since been revoked. It is only natural, it would certainly not be human to think otherwise. In all revolutions, many lag behind or go back on their steps. The whole question is whether the current still flows down below on the bed of the stream. Here is a piece of testimony whose importance and impartiality cannot be doubted.

The "Manchester Guardian", the intelligent liberalism of which is well known but which represents powerful interests directly imperilled by the Non-co-operation movement, sent out a representative to report on Indian conditions. This report was published in a series of articles. Notwithstanding the want of sympathy with the movement (very natural) and a feeling of prejudice, one could note, reading through these articles, an increasing disquietude about the gravity of the situation for England. I shall summarise here the last article. The representative wishes to persuade himself that the Gandhian tactics received a rude check and that the Non-co-operation movement has to reorganise itself on new plans. "But," adds he, "the spirit of Non-co-operation has come to stay. Everywhere there exists, if not pure Gandhism, a feeling of suspicion towards the foreign government and a desire to throw off its yoke. The educated classes and the townsmen are completely impregnated with this spirit. The *Raiyat* is influenced by it only superficially, but the conditions in the villages are such that the villagers also may in course of time come to share this feeling. The army still appears to be free from such influences but it is recruited from the villages, and sooner or later it will also follow the movement. It is often amongst the best men and amongst the moderates that the Non-co-operation spirit appears strongest. Moderates only oppose revolutionary methods, but this aversion is not shared by the country at large. The people sympathise more with the temerity of the Non-co-operators than with the prudence of the Moderates. This English observer estimates that it will take ten years before there can be an organisation of Indian peasants which will resort to refusal of payment of taxes. But from now onwards, the situation will not cease to grow worse. It is impossible to hold

were not already for a long time inscribed in the genius of the race! A person might be great by his own inherent nobility irrespective of the fact whether or not his teachings accord with those of his fellow men: but such a person can exert effective and active influence only when he is the mouthpiece of the instincts of his race, of the necessities of the time, of the hope of the whole world.

IV

Such is Mahatma Gandhi. His principle of

Indians in check by the fear of the prison. Harder measures of repression will have to be resorted to and these will only augment the hatred of Indians towards Englishmen. "One peaceful solution alone is possible, if at all. England should take the initiative in granting India reforms, not semi-reforms like those granted in 1919. These reforms were insufficient and time is pressing. Let England assemble a national Indian convention where all the interests and all the shades of Indian thought are represented, Gandhi and his disciples, Indian Capitalists, Princes, Musulmans, Hindus, Parsis, Europeans, Christians the untouchables, and let this convention prepare an autonomous constitution for India within the Empire and let the different stages of the carrying out of this Home Rule also be laid down! Thus and thus alone will the destruction of the Empire be averted."

I do not know how the India Government and the English bureaucracy would view a project like the one advocated by the representative of the "Manchester Guardian". I have difficulty in believing that Gandhi and his band would gladly associate themselves with the capitalists and Europeans in one assembly. But what now appears certain is that the possibility of Home Rule for India is no more doubted or questioned. In one manner or other, it seems to be inevitable. Nothing is more striking than the change of tone in the English Press since the commencement of the activities of Gandhi. European contempt towards Indians is a thing of the past. Indians are referred to with great respect and all are agreed in attacking the tactless violence which has hitherto been the ultimate, and sometimes even the first, weapon of Power. India has morally triumphed.

Ahimsa remains inscribed in the heart of India for two thousand years. Mahavira, Buddha and the Cult of Vishnu had inculcated this principle in millions of souls. Gandhi has only transfused his heroic blood for its glorification. He has only conjured up gigantic shades of the past which had been lying prostrate in a mortal lethargy. At the sound of his voice, they have arisen, for they recognise themselves in him. He represents more than a message, he is himself a great example. He has incarnated in himself the best souls of his land.

But these resurrections of the soul do not happen by chance or hazard. And if the soul of India has issued forth from her forests and her temples, it is for carrying into the world the predestined response which the world had been anxiously expecting for a long time.

Indeed, this response infinitely goes beyond the limits of India. India alone, however, could give it. The response involved as much her greatness as her sacrifice. The response has almost proved to be India's Cross.

It seems as if a people should always sacrifice themselves so that there might result a renovation of the world. The Jews were sacrificed for their Messiah whom they, after having brought up and nourished with their hopes for centuries, failed to recognise when he at last blossomed forth on the bloody Cross. Luckier than the Jews, the Hindus have recognised their Messiah and it is with a glad

heart that they now accept the sacrifice which should deliver them.

But like the first Christians, all do not understand the real meaning of this liberation. For a long time the early Christians expected on earth the *adveniat regnum tuum*. The hopes of a large body of the followers of the Indian movement do not go beyond the reign of Swaraj in India. I do not think that this political ideal will soon be attained. Europe, bleeding from her Wars and revolutions, impoverished and destitute, deprived of her prestige in the eyes of Asia, which she has been oppressing, will not be in a position to continue her leadership, on the soil of Asia, over the awakened peoples of Islam, India, China and Japan.

V

It would not, however, be enough if there merely arose a few more nations, however rich may be the new harmonies with which they will enrich the human symphony; it would not be enough if these new forces of Asia did not form the vehicle of a new principle of living, of dying and (what is more important) of acting for the whole of humanity, if, in short, they did not provide for exhausted Europe a new viaticum.

A tornado of violence has swept over the world. This destructive storm is not a sudden or unexpected thing. Centuries of brutal national pride, exalted by the idolatrous "ideology" of the Revolution, propagated by the blind imitation of democracies,

and, to crown all, a century of inhuman industrialism and gluttonous plutocracy, an enslaving cult of the Machine, an economic materialism in which the soul dies of suffocation—all these have led us to that unhappy predicament where we have lost the treasures of Western Civilisation. Each race throttles the other in the name of the same set of principles all of which alike only mask the principles of Cain. Each race—be it composed of Fascists, Nationalists, bolshevists, oppressed classes or oppressing classes—each claims, as its own special prerogative, the right to use violence. For one half-century Force was leading the Right: to-day it is still worse, Force *is* right, the former has swallowed up the latter.

In the vast world which is fast falling into decay, no asylum, no hope. No great light. The Church offers anodinous counsels which, however, are carefully and prudently manipulated so as not to come into clash with the strong; and, besides, the Church never sets the example. Dull and insipid pacifists plead languidly, but we feel that they are hesitating, that they speak of a faith which they themselves are not sure of. Who will prove to them the existence and efficacy of this faith? And how can it be proved, in the midst of this world which denies it, in the only manner in which every faith can be proved and justified? In action!

VI

Here, then, is the *Message to the world*, the

message of India, through the mouth of its Messiah :
“ *Let us sacrifice ourselves !* ”

And Tagore has said the same thing in magnificent words,* for on this bold principle, Tagore and Gandhi are at one :

“ I hope that this spirit of sacrifice and willingness to suffer will grow in strength ; for to achieve this is an end in itself. This is the true freedom. Nothing is of higher value, be it national wealth, or independence, than disinterested faith in the moral greatness of man. The West has its unshakable faith in material strength and prosperity ; and, therefore, however loud grows the cry for peace and disarmament, its ferocity growls louder, gnashing its teeth and lashing its tail in impatience. It is like a fish, hurt by the pressure of the flood, planning to fly in the air. Certainly the idea is brilliant, but it is not possible for a fish to realize it. We, in India, shall have to show to the world, what is that truth, which not only makes disarmament possible but turns it into strength. That moral force is a higher power than brute force will be proved by the people who are unarmed. Life, in its higher development, has thrown off its tremendous burden of armour and a prodigious quantity of flesh, till man has become the conqueror of the brute world. The day is sure to come, when the frail man of spirit, completely unhampered by arms and air fleets, and dreadnoughts, will prove that the meek is to inherit the earth. It is in the fitness of things that Mahatma Gandhi, frail in body and devoid of all material resources, should call up the immense power of the meek that has been lying waiting in

* Letter of March 2, 1921, published in the *Modern Review* of May 1921.

the heart of the destitute and insulted humanity of India. The destiny of India has chosen for its ally, *Narayan*, and not the *Narayansena*, the power of soul and not that of muscle. And she is to raise the history of man from the muddy level of physical conflict to the higher moral altitude. What is Swaraj? It is *maya*, it is like a mist that will vanish, leaving no stain on the radiance of the Eternal. However we may delude ourselves with the phrases learnt from the West, Swaraj is not our objective. Our fight is a spiritual fight; it is for Man. We are to emancipate Man from the meshes that he himself has woven round him, these organisations of National Egoism. The butterfly will have to be persuaded that the freedom of the sky is of higher value than the shelter of the cocoon. . . . If we can defy the strong, the armed, the wealthy, revealing to the world the power of the immortal spirit, the whole castle of the Giant Flesh will vanish in the void. And then Man will find his Swaraj. We, the famished, ragged ragamuffins of the East are to win freedom for all humanity."

VII

O Tagore! O Gandhi! rivers of India, who, like the Indus and the Ganges, clasp within your double embrace the Orient and the Occident,—the latter a tragedy of heroic action, the former a vast dream of light—both streaming forth from the home of God, on this world tilled by the plough-shares of Hate and Violence, scatter His seeds!

XI

CONCLUSION

“ Our fight,” Gandhi has said, *“ has for its object friendship with the whole world. . . . Non-violence has come amongst men and it will stay. It is the harbinger of the peace of the world ”.*

I

The peace of the world lies far in the future. We entertain no illusions about it. In the course of the past fifty years, we have abundantly seen the untruths, the villainies and the cruelties of the human race. This however should not prevent us from loving it still, for even amongst the vilest of men there is a *nescio quid Dei*. We do not ignore the materialistic fatalities which weigh over twentieth century Europe, the destructive character of the economic conditions, and the centuries of petrified passions and errors which have formed, around the souls of our age, a hard crust through which light cannot penetrate. But we also know of what miracles the soul is capable. History shows us instances where the rays of powerful souls have pierced through more gloomy skies than ours. At

this moment we hear in India the tambour of Shiva, "the Master-dancer who veils his devouring eyes and controls his steps to rescue the universe from falling into the abyss".*

II

The "Realpolitikers" of violence (revolutionary or reactionary) may ridicule this optimistic faith, but they thereby only exhibit their ignorance of things. Let them rail and smile! I feel this faith in me. I see it persecuted and scoffed at in Europe; and, in my own land, we are only a handful. . . . (Are we really only a handful?). . . . But if nobody shared my faith, what matters it to me? Faith, far from gainsaying the opposition of the world, sees it and yet believes, in spite of it. For Faith is a combat. And our Non-Violence is the hardest fight that we have to wage. The path of Peace is not that of weakness or cowardice. We are less enemies of Violence than of weakness. A whole world of evil is preferable to emasculated good. Soft-hearted pacifism is fatal to peace; it is really cowardice and want of faith. Let those who do not believe or who fear, keep back from the struggle. The path of peace is the path of self-sacrifice and suffering.

III

This is the lesson of Gandhi. Only the Cross is

* Extract from the invocation to Siva in *Mudra-Rakshasha* by Vishakadatta.

wanting to him. Everyone knows that, without the Jews, Rome would have refused it to Christ. And the British Empire is like the Roman Empire. The elan has been created. The soul of the Eastern peoples has been stirred to its very depths and vibrations are heard all over the earth.

Great religious appearances in the East have always a rhythm. One of two things will surely happen: either the faith of Gandhi will be crowned with success, or it will repeat itself, just as centuries ago Christ and Buddha were born, in the complete incarnation of a mortal demi-God of a principle of life that will lead future humanity to a safer and more peaceful resting-place!

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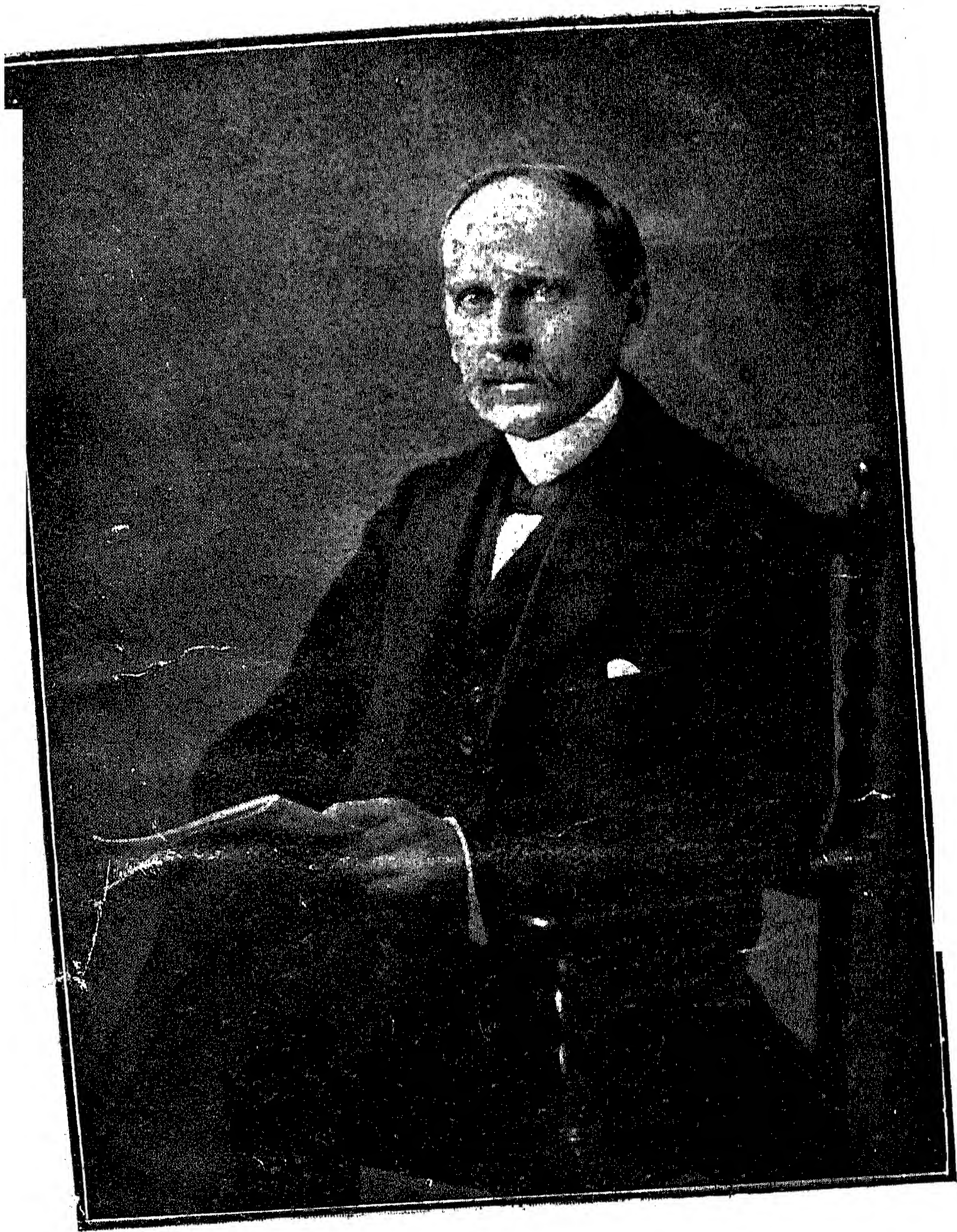
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(1) "*Young India*", Gandhi's Journal which continues to appear at Ahmedabad (his son is now the printer and publisher);



Thomas Holland

MAHATMA GANDHI

A Study in Indian Nationalism

BY

ROMAIN ROLLAND

Translated from French

BY L. V. RAMASWAMI AIYAR



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1923

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PREFACE

At the beginning of this essay, I beg to convey my affectionate thanks to my friend Kalidas Nag, whose knowledge and never-failing courtesy have often guided my erring steps through the forest of Hindu thought. I request him to pardon me for all the errors which this essay might still contain, notwithstanding his valuable help. I consider this essay only as a first attempt, a rough sketch indispensable to the European public, which I shall take up again in greater detail, after finishing this.

I thank similarly the publisher, S. Ganesan of Madras, who has willingly placed at my disposal a great portion of his publications.

R. R.

*To the land of glory and of servility,
To the land of impermanent Empires but of
[eternally glorious thoughts,
To the peoples who bid defiance to Time,
To renovated India !*

*Composed for the anniversary of the
condemnation of the Messiah of that land
(18th March 1922)*

O Tagore! O Gandhi! rivers of India, who, like
Indus and the Ganges, encircle in your double embrace
the East and the West—the latter, Mahatma, master
of self-sacrifice and of heroic action—the former
vast dream of light—both issuing from God Himself
on this world tilled by the ploughshare of Him
Scatter, Scatter His seeds!

March, 1923

MAHATMA* GANDHI

I

THE EARLY CAREER OF MAHATMA GANDHI

A SMALL weak man, with a lean face and tranquil brown eyes, and with spread-out big ears. He wears a white head-dress, a coarse white cloth cover his body, and his feet are bare. His food consists of rice, fruits and water; he sleeps on the floor; he sleeps but for a short while; and he works untiringly. His bodily appearance does not count at all—"A

* This is the literal meaning of the word which was bestowed on Gandhi. Maha=Grand, Athma=Soul. The name can be traced back to the Upanishads, where it denotes the Supreme Being and, through communion of knowledge and of love, those who unite themselves with him.

He is the luminous one, the creator of all, the Mahatma,
Always enthroned in the heart of the peoples,
Revealed by heart, by intuition and by intelligence,
He who knows him, becomes immortal.

When in December last Tagore visited Gandhi's Ashram he cited the beautiful verse from a well-known Upanishad and applied it to the postle.